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HYMN OF THE ASCENSION.

BRIGHT portals of the sky,
Embossed with sparkling stars,
Doors of eternity,
With diamantine bars,
Your arras rich uphold,
Loose all your bolts and springs,
Ope wide your leaves of gold,
That in your roofs may come the King of Kings.

Scarfed in a rosy cloud,
He doth ascend the air ;
Straight doth the moon Him shroud
With her resplendent hair ;
The next encrystalled light
Submits to Him its beams ;
And He doth trace the height
Of that fair lamp which flames of beauty
streams.

He towers those golden bounds
He did to the sun bequeath ;
The higher wandering rounds
Are found His feet beneath ;
The milky way comes near ;
Heaven's axle seems to bend
Above each burning sphere,
That robed in glory heaven's King may ascend.

O well-spring of this All,
Thy Father's image live,
Word, that from nought did call
What is, doth reason, live,
The soul's eternal food,
Earth's joy, delight of heaven,
All Truth, Love, Beauty, Good,
To Thee, to Thee, be praises ever given !
Drummond of Hawthornden.

KING FRITZ.

(FOUND AMONG THE PAPERS OF THE LATE
W. M. THACKERAY.)

KING FRITZ at his palace of Berlin
I saw at a royal carouse,
In a periwig powdered and curling
He sat with his hat on his brows.
The handsome young princes were present,
Uncovered they stood in the hall ;
And oh ! it was wholesome and pleasant
To see how he treated them all !

Reclined on the softest of cushions
His Majesty sits to his meats,
The princes, like loyal young Prussians,
Have never a back to their seats.
Off salmon and venison and pheasants
He dines like a monarch august ;
His sons, if they eat in his presence,
Put up with a bone or a crust.

He quaffs his bold bumpers of Rhenish,
It can't be too good or too dear ;
The princes are made to replenish
Their cups with the smallest of beer.

And if ever, by words or grimaces,
Their highnesses dare to complain,
The King flings a dish in their faces,
Or batters their bones with his cane.

'Tis thus that the chief of our nation
The minds of his children improves ;
And teaches polite education
By boxing the ears that he loves.
I warrant they vex him but seldom,
And so if we dealt with our sons,
If we up with our cudgels and felled 'em,
We'd teach 'em good manners at once.

Cornhill Magazine.

THAMES VALLEY SONNETS.

I. — WINTER.

How large that thrush looks on the bare
thorn-tree !

A swarm of such, three little months ago,
Had hidden in the leaves and let none know
Save by the outburst of their minstrelsy.
A white flake here and there — a snow-lily
Of last night's frost — our naked flower-
beds hold ;

And for a rose-flower on the darkling mould
The hungry redbreast gleams. No bloom, no
bee.

The current shudders to its ice-bound sedge :
Nipped in their bath, the stark reeds one by
one

Flash each its clinging diamond in the sun :
'Neath winds which for this Winter's sov-
ereign pledge

Shall curb great king-masts to the ocean's
edge

And leave memorial forest-kings o'erthrown.

II. — SPRING.

Soft-littered is the new-year's lambing-fold,
And in the hollowed haystack at its side
The shepherd lies o' nights now, wakeful-
eyed

At the ewes' travelling call through the dark
cold.

The young rooks cheep 'mid the thick caw o'
the old :

And near unpeopled stream-sides, on the
ground,

By her spring-cry the moorhen's nest is
found,

Where the drained flood-lands flaunt their
marigold.

Chill are the gusts to which the pastures
cower,

And chill the current where the young reeds
stand

As green and close as the young wheat on
land :

Yet here the cuckoo and the cuckoo-flower
Plight to the heart Spring's perfect imminent
hour

Whose breath shall soothe you like your dear
one's hand.

Athenæum.

DANTE G. ROSSETTI.

From The Quarterly Review.

AUTHORS AND PUBLISHERS.*

THE publication of the literary correspondence of Archibald Constable, the great Edinburgh bookseller—"Hannibal Constable," as Leyden called him with pride; "the grand Napoleon of the realms of print," as Scott dubbed him in jest; "the prince of booksellers," as James Mill saluted him in all sincerity—reopens an interesting chapter in the literary history of the last generation. Constable's career was closely connected with the starting of a new era in our literature, regarded both as a profession and as a trade. Of the chief men who took part in this movement, either as authors or as publishers, these volumes afford many interesting notices—of some only tantalizing glimpses, of others full and satisfying details. The work owes its value in this respect, not merely to Constable's position as a leading publisher, with a wide connection among the foremost literary men and women of his time, but also to Constable's character as a man, which was such as to command confidence and provoke friendship, far beyond the ordinary range of business relations.

Before going further, we are bound to acknowledge the fairness, delicacy, and tact, as well as to commend the literary skill, with which, in these volumes, Constable's son has discharged a difficult and, in some respects, a painful task. He has nothing extenuated, nor aught set down in malice, though the provocation to transgress in both directions, when we remember Lockhart's gross misrepresentations and rude ridicule, to say nothing of Campbell's sneers, was by no means small. In connection with the history of the Scott-Ballantyne failure in particular, the biographer might fairly have claimed for himself considerable license of vituperation. But he has, as wisely as courageously, resisted this temptation, and has confined himself almost exclusively to stating facts and quoting documents, leaving it to his readers to

make the legitimate deductions and animadversions. The result is such a portrait of Archibald Constable, the man and the publisher, as does justice at once to the integrity of the father and to the fidelity of the son, and as satisfies the expectations both of the student of literary history and of the student of human nature. Indirectly, literature owes this man a very great debt of gratitude. Sir James Mackintosh, writing to him in sympathetic terms after the great crash of 1826, says, "You have done more to promote the interest of literature than any man who has been engaged in the commerce of books." (vol. ii. p. 378). He first set the fashion of enlightened liberality towards authors, a fashion which his rivals were forced to follow. He stimulated the public taste for pure and sound literature; and he was the first to show how works of the highest class might be brought within the reach of the masses, without fear or risk of failure. Then, in order to realize the extent of his direct services to literature, and to freedom of thought, we have only to remember that he was the first publisher of the *Edinburgh Review*, that he infused new life into the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, that through him Scott's poems, most of his novels, and the best of his miscellaneous works, were given to the world, and that his *Miscellany* was, as his biographer says, "undoubtedly the pioneer and suggester of all the various 'libraries' which sprang up in its wake." It is interesting to find in the memoir abundant proof that the great bookseller was also a good and estimable man—good in all the relations of life—a loving husband, an affectionate and judicious parent, a fast and trusted friend.

In one respect the plan of Constable's memoir is open to objection. It carries us repeatedly over the same period of time, and forces us to traverse, over and over again, though in different company, the same ground. The third volume, which is devoted to his connection with Sir Walter Scott, is to a great extent self-contained and self-explanatory. But, in the first and second volumes, each chapter deals with his connection with

* *Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents: A Memorial.* By his Son, THOMAS CONSTABLE. Three vols. Edinburgh. 1873.

one correspondent, or at most with three or four. Thus, in company with his partner A. G. Hunter, we traverse the years from 1803 to 1811. In the next chapter we return to 1802, and go on with Tom Campbell to 1810. John Leyden brings us back again to 1800, and we advance in his pleasant company to 1808. The account of Alexander Murray, the Orientalist,—a monograph, let it be said in passing, of rare literary and personal interest, a portrait of a sterling, hard-headed, independent, and withal modest Scot—carries us back to 1794, and forward to 1812. Nor is this all; the same topics turn up again and again in different connections. To take but one example, Constable's quarrel with Longman is mentioned first in the general account of the *Edinburgh Review* (vol. i. p. 55). It comes up again in the chapter on A. G. Hunter (vol. i. p. 79); once more, in treating of his dealings with John Murray (vol. i. p. 338); and yet again in describing his competition with Murray, and with Longman, for the patronage of Sir Walter Scott (vol. iii. p. 32): and so with not a few other important items.

The method of the work has no doubt some advantages. In particular, it gives completeness and individuality to the descriptions of the separate correspondents; but this completeness of the parts is gained at a sacrifice of the unity and harmony of the whole. It makes the work analytic instead of synthetic, which such a work ought expressly to be. It presents us with a series of cabinet portraits, instead of with a historical picture. It furnishes the materials for such a picture in abundance; but it leaves the grouping and arranging—in a word the synthesis—to be done by the reader, and that at a considerable expenditure of trouble, and with no little risk of error and misconstruction. But when every deduction has been made, on this or on any score, the work must be admitted to be a sterling one; and, as *mémoires pour servir*, it cannot fail to be of the highest value to the student of modern literature and of modern society.

The work, however, has much wider bearings than those on the literature of

the present century to which we have referred. It suggests a comparative inquiry, of great interest and value, into the relations which have subsisted, at different periods in the history of literature, between authors and publishers, or rather between authors on the one hand, and publishers and the public on the other. Sir Walter Scott says in his "Life of Dryden," "That literature is ill-recompensed is usually rather the fault of the public than of the booksellers, whose trade can only exist by buying that which can be sold to advantage. The trader who purchased the 'Paradise Lost' for £10 had probably no very good bargain."* Curiously enough, this quotation enables us to bring together extremes of literary remuneration which are "wide as the poles asunder;" for in the same year in which Scott wrote these words, he himself received from Constable £1,000 for the copyright of "Marmion," a price which, we believe, did not turn out to the disadvantage of the bookseller. We may therefore safely conclude, that when Scott alluded as above to "Paradise Lost," he did not refer to the intrinsic merit of Milton's immortal epic, but only to the condition of the popular taste, and commercial demand, under which it was produced. Scott's words make it plain that three factors have to be taken into account in appraising literary property—the labour of the author in producing his work, the desire of the public to possess it, and the risk of the publisher as a go-between in bringing the author and the public into contact.

In the earliest stages of literature there were no publishers in the modern sense, and there was scarcely any public. Before the introduction of printing the manner of publishing a book was to have it read on three days successively before one of the universities or some other recognized authority. If it met with approbation, copies of it were then permitted to be made by monks, scribes, illuminators, and readers,—men who were specially trained in the art, and who de-

* "The Works of John Dryden, with Notes, &c., and a Life of the Author." By Walter Scott, Esq. Vol. i., p. 392. Edinburgh: 1808.

rived from it their maintenance. It does not appear that any portion of their gains was transferred to the author. He did not look for remuneration in money for his literary labour. He found it, partly in fame, but chiefly in his appointment to some post, more or less lucrative, in Church or State. Frequently authors became simply the pensioners of the great and noble, by whom no official services were expected. Chaucer appears to have been rewarded in both ways; at one time he was a pensioner-yeoman of Edward III., at another he was employed to hire ships for the king's service. At various times in his career he held offices in the customs. A modern poet,* who specially claims to call Chaucer "master," pictures for us —

The clear Thames bordered by its gardens
green;

While, nigh the thronged wharf, Geoffrey
Chaucer's pen

Moves over bills of lading.

In the very year in which he is believed to have written the "Canterbury Tales" he was appointed clerk of the king's works at Windsor. Yet towards the close of his life he seems to have been wholly dependent on his royal pensions and grants of wine. Thus there sprang, almost necessarily we may say, out of the primary condition of authors, that vile system of patronage which kept men of letters in a position of bondage for upwards of three centuries after our regular literature began.

The introduction of printing made but little difference to authors. It ere long did away with the university censorship; but books were so dear that they were within reach of the means only of the very wealthy, on whose bounty, therefore, authors were still dependent; and very wretched was their lot. "Rhetoric," says Burton, in his "Anatomy of Melancholie," "only serves them to curse their bad fortunes; and many of them, for want of means, are driven to hard shifts. From grasshoppers they turn humble bees and wasps — plain parasites — and make the muses mules, to

satisfy their hunger-starved families, and get a meal's meat." (A.D. 1621).

Spenser also has put on record his bitter feelings on the same subject with special reference to the misery of hangers-on at court. It is said that Queen Elizabeth designed an annuity for Spenser, but that it was withheld by Burleigh. He received, however, from the queen a grant of Kilcolman Castle when he was secretary to Lord Grey in Ireland; but evidently this complaint is wrung from him by his own bitter experience —

Full little knowest thou, that hast not tried,
What hell it is, in suing long to bide;
To lose good days that might be better spent;
To waste long nights in pensive discontent;
To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow,
To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow;
To have thy princess' grace, yet want her
Peers';

To have thy asking, yet wait many yeares;
To fret thy soul with crosses and with care;
To eat thy heart with comfortless despair;
To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run;
To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.*

Authorship could scarcely be subjected to a greater humiliation than that of John Stowe, the historian, in whose favour James I. granted letters patent under the great seal, permitting him "to ask, gather, and take the alms of all our loving subjects." Yet Stowe's case differed from that of hundreds of his contemporaries and successors only in that he was more honest than they. For, while they were beggars in disguise, he was an avowed and properly licensed mendicant. His letters patent were read by the clergy from the pulpit in each parish which he visited. Other authors prefixed their begging letters to their works, in the shape of fulsome and lying dedications.

The dedication system naturally accompanied that of patronage. It very soon underwent those wonderful developments of which it was evident from the first that it was capable. In the time of Queen Elizabeth the practice had come into fashion of dedicating a work, not to one patron, but to a number.

* William Morris, in "The Earthly Paradise."

* From "Proserpoeia, or Mother Hubbard's Tale."

Spenser, in spite of his horror of fawning, has prefixed to the "Faërie Queene" seventeen dedicatory sonnets, the last of which opened a wide door to volunteer patronesses, being inscribed "To all the gracious and beautifull ladies in the court." Over and above these outer dedications, be it remembered, the invocation with which the poem opens is addressed to Queen Elizabeth herself, along with the sacred Muse, Venus, Cupid, and Mars. The queen is further typified in the Faërie Queen herself; and to her the whole work is dedicated, presented, and consecrated, "to live with the eternitie of her fame."

Fuller has introduced in his "Church History" twelve special title-pages besides the general one, each with a particular dedication attached to it; and he has added upwards of fifty inscriptions to as many different benefactors. Joshua Sylvester, the translator of Du Bartas, carried the vice of dedication to a still more ludicrous excess. In the collected edition of his works,* there are seventy separate dedications, in prose and verse, addressed to eighty-five separate individuals. Sometimes one short poem is dedicated to half-a-dozen patrons. If the poet received the usual dedication fee from each, the speculation must have been as profitable as it was ingenious.† The second book of the "Divine Works" contains fifteen separate dedications. One instance of his flattery is unique in its barefaced comprehensiveness. An "elegiac epistle consolatorie" on the death of Sir William Sydney, is addressed to Lord and Lady Lisle (Sydney's parents), to Sir Robert Sydney their son, to Lady Worth their daughter, "and to all the noble Sydneys and semi-Sydneys." Surely the power of fawning could no further go! It is only to be hoped that it paid.

Nothing, certainly, could be more degrading to authors than that their success should depend, not on their merit, but on their powers of sycophancy; for it is unquestionable that the amount which a patron bestowed varied with the amount of flattery publicly awarded to him. The terms of adulation became most extravagant in the period after the Restoration, when, according to Disraeli,

the patron was often compared with, or even placed above, the Deity. Then the common price of a dedication varied from £20 to £40; sometimes it was even more. After the Revolution the price fell to sums varying from five to ten guineas; in the reign of George I. it rose again to twenty, but from that time the practice gradually declined, as the booksellers became more and more recognized as the patrons of letters.

The fall of patronage, and of its concomitant, dedication, was hastened by the general adoption in the latter part of the seventeenth century of the method of publication by subscription. Before that, the booksellers were in the background. They were mere dealers in books. No opportunity was afforded them for enterprise. As soon, however, as subscription was introduced, the booksellers began to show themselves in the front. Subscribers represented to some extent the public—a limited and adventitious public, doubtless—but still a much wider public than was possible under the patronage régime. Now with the public thus introduced we have present the most important of the three factors which go to make a free and prosperous national literature. There was then an inducement for authors to do their best, and for publishers to aid them in advancing their interests. Authorship then became possible as a liberal profession, and publishing became possible as an organized trade. It was a timid method of business, certainly, but it was a vast improvement on the method which it came to supersede. It was long before it accomplished much good, but it did accomplish lasting good in the end. In short, it was the transition stage from the system of patronage to the system of free and unfettered publication.

In truth, however, subscription was, in the first instance, only a more extended kind of patronage; and for a long time the two methods continued to exist side by side. Of this a remarkable example is afforded in the case of Dryden, who seems, however, to have had a wonderful aptitude for combining in his own experience all the methods of remunerating authorship in vogue in remote as well as in later times—official appointments, royal pensions, dedication fees, subscriptions, and copy money. He was poet laureate and historiographer royal; * he

* Folio, pp. 657, printed by R. Young in 1633.

† Even Sylvester's ingenuity was surpassed by that of an Italian physician, of whom Disraeli tells us. Having written "Commentaries on the Aphorisms of Hippocrates," he dedicated each book of his commentaries to one of his friends, and the index to another.

* Both offices still exist; but it is surely time that such questionable and often invidious distinctions should be abolished, or at least that they should be deprived

was, besides, a special annuitant of Charles II.—to whom the whilom eulogist of Cromwell justifies his submission in the sorry couplet—

The poets who must live by courts, or starve,
Were proud so good a government to serve,—

and he was collector of customs in the port of London, as Chaucer had been three hundred years before.

As regards dedication fees, it is notorious that no flattery was too fulsome, no depth of self-abasement too profound, for Dryden's mendicant spirit. If the pay was proportionate to the degree of adulation, he was certainly entitled to the maximum. He dedicated his translation of Virgil to three noblemen, with what Johnson calls "an economy of flattery at once lavish and discreet." What this investment of praise yielded him we do not know; but in his letter of thanks to one patron (Lord Chesterfield), he characterizes his lordship's donation as a "noble present." The extraordinary feature in this case, however, is, that in addition to dedication fees, Dryden received for his Virgil both subscriptions and copy money. The copy money consisted certainly of £50 for every two books of the "Æneid," and probably of the same sum for the "Georgics" and the "Pastorals." The plan of subscription was ingeniously contrived so as to create a supplementary galaxy of patrons, each of whom was propitiated by what was in effect a special dedication. There were two classes of subscribers. Those in the first class paid five guineas each; those in the second class, two guineas. The inducement offered to the five guinea subscribers was that in honour of each of them there should be inserted in the work an engraving embellished at the foot with his coat of arms. The bait took wonderfully. There were in the end one hundred and two subscribers of five guineas, representing the sum of 510 guineas, which, calculating the guinea, as Dryden did, at twenty-nine shillings, amounted to £739 10s. Indeed, Dryden was a cunning speculator as well as a shrewd bargain-driver, as his publisher found to his cost. According to Pope's

estimate, Dryden netted from his Virgil the sum of £1,200.

The publication of that work was the occasion of frequent bickerings, and the interchange of much strong language, between Dryden and his publisher, the famous Jacob Tonson (Jacob I., for there were three of that name and dynasty). Dryden's standing complaint against Tonson is, that he pays him in bad coin. "You know," he says, in one letter, "money is now very scrupulously received; in the last which you did me the favour to change for my wife, besides the clip'd money, there were at least forty shillings brass." In another he says that, when the eighth "Æneid" is finished, he expects "£50 in good silver, not such as I have had formerly. I am not obliged to take gold, neither will I; nor stay for it four-and-twenty hours after it is due." In another, "I lost thirty shillings, or more, by the last payment of £50 which you made at Mr. Knight's." Throughout the correspondence, Dryden treats Tonson in the rudest and most bearish manner possible. He usually addresses him abruptly as "Mr. Tonson," much as a gentleman might address his tailor.* In what Scott calls a "wrathful letter," which, however, made no impression "on the mercantile obstinacy of Tonson," he says, "Some kind of intercourse must be carried on betwixt us while I am translating Virgil. . . . You always intended I should get nothing by the second subscriptions, as I found from first to last. . . . I then told Mr. Congreve that I knew you too well to believe you meant me any kindness." In yet another grumbling epistle, Dryden says, "Upon trial I find all of your trade are sharpers, and you not more than others; therefore I have not wholly left you;" from all which it is evident that, in Dryden's time, the relations of publisher and author were still on a very unsatisfactory footing.

Dryden died in the last year of the seventeenth century; but, although at that very time the publishers, led by such men as the Tonsons and Lintot, were consolidating the publishing trade, they were still in the leading-strings of subscription; and during the greater part of the eighteenth century, patronage, with its correlative dedication, continued rampant.

of their eleemosynary character. Thanks to such men as Archibald Constable, the men who deserve such honours no longer need the paltry salaries attached to them. Mr. Tennyson has effected the *reductio ad absurdum* of the laureateship. His salary is £300 a year; yet, if report speaks truly, his contract with his publishers yields him an annual return to be estimated in thousands.

* But this was not peculiar to Dryden. Twenty years later we find Steele addressing Lintot and Pope addressing Motte in precisely the same style. See Caruthers's "Life of Pope," pp. 96-97. By way of contrast, it is noteworthy that Sir Walter Scott usually addresses his publisher as "My dear Constable." Such trifles are not insignificant.

The world of letters was still dominated by such princely patrons as Somers, Harley, and Halifax, who were

Fed with soft dedication all day long.

This is all the more remarkable, since, at that very time, literature was making vigorous efforts to emancipate itself. Then popular literature took its rise in Defoe's *Review* and Steele's *Tatler*, and Steele and Addison's *Spectator*. No man ever stood out more determinedly as the enemy of patronage than Richard Steele, and all honour be to him for his powerful testimony. But Steele could afford to be independent; for he derived from his first wife a comfortable income of £670 a year. In the *Tatler*, he had boldly proclaimed his ambition "to make our lucubrations come to some price in money, for our more convenient support in the public service." Yet Steele had, in 1707, accepted the office of Gazetteer, with a salary raised by Harley from £60 to £300 a year; and in 1715, he was made Surveyor of the Royal Stables at Hampton Court. Steele ridiculed patronage as a "monstrous" institution in the *Spectator*,* yet the first and second collected volumes of that serial were dedicated respectively to the arch-patrons, Lord Somers and Lord Halifax. This, however, may have been Addison's doing, who was the special foster-child of these noblemen, and who lived from first to last by his official employment. John Locke, according to Lord Macaulay, "owed opulence to Somers;" and it was at Locke's death that Addison, in reward of writing the "Campaign," obtained, through Halifax, the post of Commissioner of Appeal in the Excise, which Locke had vacated. He received for the post £200 a year, a sum which enabled him, no doubt, to leave his garret in the Haymarket. Every step he gained between that garret and Holland House, he owed to the same kind of influence. He was Under-Secretary of State, his chief being the Earl of Sunderland, to whom vol. vi. of the *Spectator* was dedicated, vol. iv. having previously been dedicated to Marlborough, Sunderland's father-in-law. Addison's next post was Chief Secretary for Ireland, during the viceroyalty of the notorious Lord Wharton, to whom vol. v. of the *Spectator* was dedicated, in terms which extolled his business capacity, but which were judiciously silent regarding his moral character. On

the death of Queen Anne, Addison was made Secretary to the provisional Regency, and two years later he became Secretary of State. Addison was undoubtedly the first literary man of his time; yet, throughout his career, he was paid in political advancement for his literary labours; for it is well known that his business capacity was of the poorest order. No man ever had a better opportunity than Addison had of asserting the independence of literature, yet he was always willing to use it as his ladder, rather than as his stage.

In this Addison was by no means singular in his day. The chief of his contemporaries lived, or tried to live, by the same means; though few were so fortunate as he was. Defoe was secretary to the joint commission which drew up the Articles of Union, and was afterwards sent to Scotland on a special mission to advance its interests; but Defoe was twice fined and imprisoned for political libel, and on the earlier occasion at least was pilloried as well. Men of letters who lived by politics, had to take their share, not only of political profit, but also of political suffering. Prior, who was twice secretary to a foreign embassy (thanks to his patron Lord Dorset), and twice virtually an ambassador, was charged with high treason, in connection with the Treaty of Utrecht, and was imprisoned for two years. This sent him back to his fellowship and his books. He then published his poems by subscription, and realized £10,000. The Earl of Oxford played the grand patron and added other £10,000; and thus the poet's last days were comfortably provided for. Congreve was more fortunate. He received from Halifax (Addison's patron) different posts in the customs, which yielded him £600 a year; and after the accession of the house of Hanover, he was made Secretary to the Island of Jamaica, which nearly doubled his income. Gay was the most unlucky of all literary place-hunters. In 1714 he quitted his post of private secretary to the Duchess of Monmouth, to accompany Lord Clarendon, Envoy Extraordinary to Hanover, in the capacity of secretary. Gay wrote to Pope in great glee about his good fortune. But he kept the post only for a month or two. He made several attempts, subsequently, to enlist Court favor on his behalf, but without success. Once he was offered a humble post, which he declined with indignation. That made his reputation; for to that

* See No. cxxxviii.

disappointment, in all probability, we owe "The Beggar's Opera."* By the publication and performance of that play, and by the publication (by subscription of course) of "Polly," a sequel to it, the performance of which was prohibited, Gay realized nearly £3,000.

These details serve to show us how great authors lived and were remunerated during the period that connects the reign of Dryden with the reign of Pope. Two things seem to be clearly demonstrated—that authors were not yet free from their bondage to personal and political patrons; and that publishers had not yet learned to rely on the patronage of the public. The latter were still, as Dryden called them, mere "chapmen" of books; and their gains depended mainly on the amount of patronage, represented by subscriptions, which the influence of authors could bring them. In fact their interest lay, as Dryden hinted very plainly to Tonson, in intercepting as large a share as possible of the subscriptions which passed through their hands.

The connecting link between Dryden and Pope, for our present purpose at least, was Jacob Tonson—"left-legged Jacob," as Pope wickedly called him, referring to a personal deformity. In truth, however, the whole of Pope's satirical allusions to Tonson were somewhat ungenerous—though they were not the less Pope-ish on that account—for Tonson was the first bookseller who recognized Pope's merit. In 1706 he wrote to Pope in flattering terms, offering to publish, in his forthcoming *Miscellany*, Pope's "Pastorals," which he had seen in manuscript—an offer which Pope was too shrewd a man of business to reject; and the publication at once placed Pope in the front rank of the authors of his time. It was this transaction that suggested Wycherley's profane remark, that "Jacob's ladder had raised Pope to immortality." Yet, not long afterwards, we find Pope writing thus of his patron: "Jacob creates poets as kings do knights; not for their honour, but for their money. Certainly he ought to be esteemed a worker of miracles who is grown rich by poetry." The extent of Tonson's wealth is uncertain; but we know that when his nephew, Jacob II., died in 1735, —a year before the uncle closed his

ledger forever,—he left a fortune of £100,000, the greater part of which old Jacob inherited.

Pope, however, like Scott at a later period, found it advantageous to extend his publishing connections. Besides Tonson, he had dealings of one kind or another with Lintot, Curll, Dodsley, Gilliver, and Motte, to mention no others. With Curll, the supposed surreptitious publisher of his letters, his relations were anything but friendly. A ridiculous turn is given to these relations by an apocryphal story circulated by Curll, of an attempt which he believed or pretended to believe, that Pope had made to poison him in a tavern, at their first and only meeting, in consequence of his having ascribed to Pope the authorship of "The Court Poems," three of Lady Mary Wortley Montague's "Town Eclogues." The publisher with whom Pope's name is chiefly associated, however, was Bernard Lintot. In one of his most biting and humorous prose sketches, Pope describes a journey to Oxford, performed in company with Lintot, whom he holds up to the most unmitigated ridicule. Yet Lintot was the publisher of Pope's *Homer*, a speculation from which he derived between £8,000 and £9,000, and which enabled him to set up his villa at Twickenham. This success allowed Pope to triumph over the slavery of patronage in a memorable couplet:—

And thanks to Homer, since I live and thrive,
Indebted to no prince or peer alive.*

It was quite characteristic of Pope, however, that he should take credit for his emancipation to himself, and forget his obligations to the booksellers. He never was thin-skinned in these matters, or indeed in any matters affecting the reputation of others. His feelings towards Lintot, his undoubted benefactor, were not more grateful or generous than those with which he regarded Tonson and Curll. In the race described in the second book of the "Dunciad," in honour of the goddess of Dulness, Lintot and Curll are entered as rival candidates.

But lofty Lintot in the circle rose:

"This prize is mine; who tempt it are my foes;

With me began this genius, and shall end."

He spoke: and who with Lintot shall contend?

* Gay's theatre receipts from the opera amounted to £693 13s. 6d. The name of the manager who shared the profits with Gay, was Rich; which suggested the mot that "'The Beggar's Opera' made Gay rich, and Rich gay."

* Vain boast; for when he was offered £1000 to suppress his attack on the Duchess of Marlborough, in the character of Atossa, he took the money, and nevertheless allowed the libel to be printed.

Fear held them mute. Alone untaught to fear
 Stood dauntless Curll: "Behold that rival
 here!

The race by vigour, not by vaunts, is won;
 So take the hindmost, H——!" (he said)
 "and run."

Swift as a bard the bailiff leaves behind,
 He left huge Lintot and outstripped the wind.
 As when a dab-chick waddles through the
 copse

On feet and wings, and flies, and wades, and
 hops;

So labouring on, with shoulders, hands, and
 head,

Wide as a windmill all his fingers spread,
 With arms expanded Bernard rows his state
 And left-legged Jacob seems to emulate.*

Pope did not stand alone in his day in his contempt for the booksellers. It is told of Young, that when Tonson and Lintot both offered for one of his works, he answered both at a sitting. In his letter to Lintot, he called Tonson "an old rascal." In his letter to Tonson, he called Lintot "a great scoundrel." After folding the letters, he transposed their addresses, and each had the advantage of learning Young's true opinion of him without Young being aware of it.

The position of authors was at its worst when Samuel Johnson began his career in London. Macaulay compares the epoch to "a dark night between two sunny days. The age of patronage had passed away. The age of general curiosity and intelligence had not arrived." The political patronage of men of letters was extinguished by Walpole, who found probably that he could employ the civil list to better purpose in securing parliamentary support, than in buying the services of needy scribblers and miserable Grub-street hacks. This fact is generally quoted to Walpole's disadvantage; but it is very questionable whether he is really to be blamed for it. The immediate effects of his policy were very deplorable. In the end, however, it threw authors on their own resources; and it led to a complete change of policy on the part of booksellers. Johnson came upon the scene in a time of literary famine, but he lived to see the change to which his own labours had in no small degree contributed. He was on very friendly terms with the booksellers. It is true that, in his lodgings, he once thrashed Tom Osborne for impertinence; but he was accustomed to dine with Tonson, then a rich man and a great power,

on terms of equality. During the period of his early struggles, when he had often to go without a dinner, Cave, the publisher of *The Gentleman's Magazine* was his hardest taskmaster; yet he esteemed Cave highly, and wrote his life, in which he gave a generous estimate of his character. Of the booksellers as a class he, a bookseller's son, always spoke in terms of respectful gratitude. "The booksellers," he said, "are generous, liberal-minded men;" and he dignified them as "the patrons of literature." Johnson spoke thus from his own experience of them, and not without reason. He contracted with them for "The Lives of the Poets" at £200. They spontaneously gave him £300; and they added another £100 when the "Lives" were issued as a separate publication. Of course it should be added that they could well afford to do so, as they cleared £5,000 by the work; but publishers, even in these days, are not always generous in proportion to their gains.

One important service which Johnson rendered to men of letters can never be forgotten. By his famous letter to Lord Chesterfield, the self-constituted patron of his "Dictionary"—whether Chesterfield deserved his strictures or not—he gave its death-blow to the system of personal patronage.* Of Chesterfield's gratuitously complimentary essays in the *World*, he said to Garrick and other friends—"I have sailed a long and difficult voyage round the world of the English language; and does he now send out his cock-boat to tow me into harbour?"

A slight incident shows the estimate Johnson had formed of the struggle in which he had engaged. In the tenth satire of his "Imitations of Juvenal" a couplet on the vanity of authors' hopes originally stood thus:—

Yet think what ills the scholar's life assail,—
 Toil, envy, want, the *garret* and the jail.

After his encounter with Chesterfield, the second line was altered to

Toil, envy, want, the *patron* and the jail.

Evidently Johnson considered "the patron" entitled to the place nearest "the jail" in the descending scale of authors' miseries.

There is a bookseller of Johnson's time, who stands out prominently from his contemporaries for liberality and

* The "Dunciad," ii. 53-68.

* But not to that of official patronage. Johnson himself, in 1762, accepted, through Lord Bute, a royal pension of £300 a year.

kindliness of heart. We refer to Andrew Millar, especially in his relations with Fielding. When James Thomson learned that Fielding had sold the copyright of "Tom Jones" to a bookseller for £25, he advised him to break the contract. This he did. Thomson then introduced him to Millar, to whom he had himself been introduced by Mallet. They met at a tavern; and when Millar offered £200 for the MS., Fielding exhibited his delight by ordering two bottles of wine. Subsequently, Millar gave Fielding £1,000 for "Amelia"—the same sum which, with what was thought startling and reckless liberality, Constable more than half a century later gave Scott for "Marmion." To the exertions of the same publisher, Dr. Burton attributes the success of Hume's "History;" and Hume boasted that the copy-money he received "much exceeded anything formerly known in England." Well might Johnson say, "I respect Millar, sir; he has raised the price of literature."

Millar's, however, was unfortunately an exceptional case. Literature, as a trade, was at that time increasingly remunerative; but the men who fattened on it were the printers and booksellers, not the authors. Think of Goldsmith grinding as a domestic slave for Griffiths—to say nothing of Mrs. Griffiths—on the *Monthly Review*. His position was but little improved when he became a bondman to Newbery, living as tenant of a relation of Newbery's in Wine Office-court, Fleet-street, and doing an occasional stroke of business on his own account for Dodsley, Wilkie, and others. It is true that, towards the end of his career, he was rather run after by the booksellers. But poor Goldy was not the man to profit by such an unlooked-for turn of fortune. He had been trained in a bad school. His personal vanity and his gambling habits always kept him poor; and when he died £2,000 in debt, Johnson exclaimed, "Was ever poet so treated before!" So matters continued till the end of the century. Gibbon, after the completion of his immortal work, was driven to reside permanently at Lausanne, not so much by taste, as by his straitened circumstances.* On the other hand, we may gather some idea of the prosperity enjoyed by the mechanical and material artificers in books from a

"valued file," prepared by Timperley,* of the printers, booksellers, and stationers of the eighteenth century, in which we find seven members of parliament, five lord mayors of London, twenty authors, and twenty-two men of wealth and substance.

It was in the last decade of the eighteenth century—the point at which in our retrospect of the relations of publishers and authors we have now arrived—that Archibald Constable—then a young man of 21 years—began business as a dealer in "scarce old books"—"scarce o' books," the wags read it—at the Cross of Edinburgh, on the very spot which had been occupied by Andro Hart, who published for Drummond of Hawthornden there, nearly two centuries before. It is evident that, before his time, what Macaulay calls "the age of general curiosity and intelligence," had begun to dawn. The fact that publishers and printers were realizing large fortunes cannot otherwise be accounted for. And no doubt the curious and intelligent public, whose patronage ultimately emancipated authors from their thralldom, was greatly increased in the general ferment, which is typified historically by the French Revolution. But the great and distinguishing service which Constable rendered to literature was, that he was the first publisher of modern times who systematically gave authors the benefit of the public patronage of letters. For in all his transactions the patron was not Archibald Constable himself, but the book-buying public which he represented, and which he relied on his power to command. It is far from complimentary to Constable, it is indeed unmeaning flattery, to speak of his liberality as if it were the same as that of a literary patron of the former age—to compare it with the liberality of Charles I. to Ben Jonson or of Lord Chesterfield to Dryden, or of Somers and Halifax to Addison. In these cases the patronage was partly a species of charity, and partly a payment for adulation. But in Constable's case it was purely a matter of business. His principles of business, no doubt, differed very widely in their enlightened breadth and liberality from those acted on by even his immediate predecessors, and continued by most of his contemporaries. Yet they were strict business principles, which he carried into practice on a syste-

* Yet Charles Knight thinks that, under the half-profit system, Gibbon's share would have been less than half of what he actually received.—"Shadows of the Old Booksellers," pp. 227-8.

* "A Dictionary of Printers and Printing, with the Progress of Literature, Ancient and Modern." By C. H. Timperley. London: 1839.

matic plan. He was resolved to be the first publisher of his time, not only for dignity's sake, but also for that of profit. He knew that, to achieve that position, he must make a bold venture. He knew that he had to compete with powerful rivals, such as Longman and William Miller in London, and John Miller, his neighbour, in Edinburgh; and he saw at once, shrewd man as he was, that his only chance of success lay in outbidding them in the literary market, and thereby in securing to himself at first hand the foremost talent of the day.

Plainly, however, Constable never could have assumed this attitude if he had not felt a corresponding degree of confidence in the public, on whose appreciation of literary work the success of literary enterprises ultimately depends. In other words, he could not afford to pay the producer more than, according to his estimate, the consumers might be expected, with the addition of a fair margin of profit, to repay him. And it was at this point that Constable's real strength showed itself. He had the utmost confidence in his own judgment — judgment, which was aided by remarkable literary insight, and which, in matters strictly professional, scarcely ever misled him. This enabled him to gauge by anticipation, with striking accuracy, the acceptability and success of the works he published. In short, he possessed a business instinct which told him how far a book would take, and he paid for it accordingly. It was only natural that the stories of his unusual liberality to authors, when bruited abroad, should have excited a degree of interest and expectancy, which would materially increase the demand for his works. Probably Constable reckoned on this. If he did, it was only another instance of that shrewdness which enabled him to grasp firmly, and to contemplate calmly, the whole state of the book trade at the time when he began to publish. He believed that the reading public was greater than was supposed; and, further, that it might be largely, almost indefinitely, increased. On this conviction all his enterprises were based. He made it his business, therefore, to command the confidence of the public. This he could do only by providing the public with the best possible article. To secure that article he must pay the best authors a higher price than his rivals. He paid it; and he succeeded.

It was necessary, however, that they should be the best authors; for nothing

shows more clearly that Constable's liberality was matter of business, and not of sentiment or caprice, than his dealings with such authors as failed to secure his entire confidence. Thus Campbell proved too keen a bargain-maker, and too dilatory a writer for Constable to have much to do with him; and Campbell, to his deep disgust, received from Constable the cold shoulder, for which he revenged himself by swearing at publishers in general as "ravens," and at Constable in particular as a "deep draw-well." James Hogg made persistent efforts, in spite of repeated rebuffs, to secure Constable as his publisher — an honour which Constable, evidently for good commercial reasons, has persistently declined. William Godwin, — the author of "Caleb Williams" and Shelley's father-in-law, — declared his inability to write his new novel unless he was paid beforehand, and modestly proposed "to be put upon a footing with the author of 'Waverley' and 'Guy Mannering.'" He accompanied his proposal with some tremendous strokes of flattery; yet Constable insisted on publishing "Mandeville" on the principle of division of profits. Sir John Leslie made a proposal *apropos* of Barrow's Arctic book; but he complains to Constable that he "seemed to listen to it coldly, as I find you generally do to all projects which do not originate with yourself;" and his request to be made Jeffrey's colleague in the *Edinburgh*, as scientific editor, was not more warmly received. The only inference that can be drawn from these facts is, that while Constable was ready to incur risk, and to make sacrifices, to secure authors whom he courted, he did not feel called on to do so to oblige authors who courted him.

That, however, which we have pointed out as constituting Constable's strength as a publisher, was also, sad to say, the undoubted source of his weakness; so true is it that

Great wits are sure to madness near allied.

The efforts he made to win Scott are instances of enlightened enterprise. The sacrifices he made to retain Scott are evidences of a morbid jealousy, which amounted to positive infatuation. Through his whole career, after 1807, he was haunted by a constant dread that one or other of his principal rivals — Murray or Longman — would wile Scott away from him by more tempting offers than he had made. That apprehension was the bug-

bear which he could never bring himself boldly to throw off; and to our thinking, it proved in the end the main cause of his ruin. It was that, and nothing else, that led him to concede Scott's ever-increasing demands for higher terms. But for that, he would never have agreed to make Scott advances, amounting in one instance to £10,000 at a time, for works still in embryo, the very titles of which had not been determined even by the author. That induced him to grant almost limitless accommodation to the Ballantynes, Scott's partners in his printing and publishing concerns; and to take over at a tremendous loss the dead stock of John Ballantyne and Co., amounting in value to thousands of pounds.

To make good these assertions, it is only necessary to review briefly Constable's dealings with Scott, and in connection therewith his alliances and ruptures with the rival houses of Murray and Longman. The whole business, it must be premised, often assumes the form of intricate and even dangerous diplomacy. The task of a skilful publisher, in such cases, is not less difficult or hazardous than that of a secretary of state or an ambassador at a foreign court, who is often driven to adopt expedients, in order to accomplish his purpose, which his cooler judgment does not approve. In this view, Constable was a consummate literary diplomatist. But the best diplomatists are sometimes overreached. And though Constable appeared to be eminently successful during the greater part of his career, we hold very decidedly that his ultimate failure had its root and origin in transactions which were rather the unwelcome expedients of diplomacy than the natural occurrences of legitimate business.

The Longman alliance began in 1802, when Constable was admitted to a fourth share in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," published by Longman in London. In the autumn of that year Mr. Longman visited Edinburgh. He went back to London, proud of his Scottish reception, delighted especially with his Edinburgh representative, and satisfied that none of his jealous rivals in the metropolis could dream of contending with his interests in the north. This confidence was somewhat misplaced. For, only a few months later, we find John Murray throwing out ingenious feelers in the very quarter in which Longman congratulated himself on his triumphant success. Murray was so far successful

that "friendly relations were speedily established" between him and Constable's house. At this point a Murray alliance begins to loom in the future. Not immediately, however; for in 1803 Longman obtained the London agency of the *Edinburgh Review*. In the following year Longman again visited Scotland, when he was conducted on a provincial tour by Constable's convivial partner, A. G. Hunter, the records of which, with its deplorable drinking experiences, fill some of the raciest pages in the memoir.

In 1805, the convivial Hunter met Murray at York, and their genial friendship, prompted no doubt by interest as well as by community of tastes, seems to have drawn still closer the bond of union between their respective houses. At the same time an unpleasant correspondence was going on between Messrs. Constable and Co. and the Longmans, on various subjects which had led to a painful dispute between the two houses. This difference reached its climax in November, 1805, when Messrs. Longman intimated their wish to break the connection. This rupture involved much more serious consequences than appear on the surface. Mr. Thomas Constable says with reference to it, "It had been well for Archibald Constable had it been otherwise. The unfortunate experiment of the establishment of a London house in 1809 would thereby have been averted, and the catastrophe of 1826 might never have occurred." (vol. i. p. 44.) What were the causes of the rupture we are not expressly told; but in a memorandum written by Constable at a later date, he says it was caused by Hunter's "warm temper" more than by anything else. The truth appears to be that Hunter, acting for Constable and Co., rashly provoked the quarrel with Longman, knowing that he had his friend Murray to fall back on, and believing that a league with the latter would be more pleasant, if not also more profitable, than that with the former. Accordingly, Murray visited Scotland in 1806, and Hunter confirmed the new alliance by putting him through experiences of Forfarshire conviviality similar to those from which Longman had suffered so sharply two years previously. Murray also "paid for it dearly" according to his host; but he returned to London, the "faithful ally" of the house of Constable.

Murray's letters to Constable at this time overflow with sentiments of friendship. A few weeks after his return to

London, he addressed the Edinburgh firm as "My dearest friends"! Thereafter the same exuberant style is continued. "Every moment, my dear Constable," he writes, in concluding one of these gushing epistles, "I feel more grateful to you, and I trust that you will ever find me your faithful friend." Hunter's "trust" was somewhat different. Writing to Constable from London a few weeks later he says, "I trust Murray is now fairly noosed." Noosed indeed he was, until his interests made it expedient for him to escape. Then his ardent addresses proved to have been the too much protesting of the faithless lover.

Before that discovery was made, however, there was much confidential intercourse between the houses. In one of Murray's letters (written in 1807) he raises the curtain a little bit, and lets us see how the diplomatic game was carried on. Referring to Constable's quarrel with Longman regarding the copyright of the *Edinburgh Review*, Murray insists on the necessity of Constable "fixing Mr. Jeffrey irrevocably to yourself; for, as in all hazardous and important cases, we must take in extremes and possibilities." The extreme possibility hinted at, evidently was that Jeffrey might be bought over by the Longmans to edit a rival *Review*. This is a clear proof of the ascendancy which authorship was acquiring in the commerce of literature. Though jealousy does not always imply warmth of affection on the one side, it generally implies power on the other. When rival authors compete for the same publisher, the publisher has the game in his own hands; but when rival publishers compete for the same author, the author is master of the situation. Into the latter condition, evidently, the book trade had now been brought, thanks to the spread of enlightenment, and the enterprise of Archibald Constable.

In due time a rival *Review* did come, — not, however, from the dreaded house of Longman, but from the friendly house of Murray. Before the end of 1807, John Murray found cause of offence in some of Constable's transactions — what, does not precisely appear; and what does appear is trivial enough, — but the upshot was, a rupture with Murray early in 1808, as complete as that with Longman had been three years before. By a curious, if not suspicious, coincidence, there occurred about the same time a serious breach between Constable and Scott.

The causes of this, in so far as they appear, were partly literary, partly political, and partly, if not chiefly, neither. Scott was hurt by the unsparing severity of the notice of "Marmion" in the *Edinburgh Review*, though, on this score, the publisher, who had given £1,000 for the copyright of the poem, had quite as weighty grounds of complaint as the author. Scott was still further incensed by what he calls "certain impertinences which, in the vehemence of their Whiggery, Messrs. Constable and Co. have dared to indulge in towards me." But probably in this, as in similar cases, the real reason was neither of those which were alleged. In short, it is evident that Scott, who had become his own printer in 1805 (James Ballantyne and Co.), was bent also on becoming his own publisher, if not with the view to acquiring for himself the whole of the profits which had previously been divided between himself and his booksellers, at least with the view of having free scope to indulge his craze for literary speculation. "He had, long before this," says Lockhart, "cast a shrewd and penetrating eye on the field of literary enterprise, and developed in his own mind the outlines of many extensive plans, which wanted nothing but the command of a sufficient body of able subalterns to be carried into execution with splendid success." *

Several important consequences quickly followed. Scott and Murray, having both quarrelled with Constable, were naturally drawn together by that "fellow-feeling" which makes men "wondrous kind." In October, 1808, "an alliance, offensive and defensive," was formed between them at Ashiestiel, where Murray happened to be a visitor. At the same time it was resolved to establish a new publishing house in Edinburgh, as a rival to Constable and Co. The issue of these negotiations was that the *Quarterly Review* was established in 1809, and that in the same year the publishing house of John Ballantyne and Co. was founded in Edinburgh, with Scott as chief partner and ruling spirit.

The consequences to Constable were of the most serious nature. He was thereby led to engage in what proved not only the first mistake in his professional career, but the beginning of fatal disasters — viz., the establishment of a London branch. Constable himself says that he was driven to this step by the "folly

* "Life of Scott," vol. ii. p. 42.

of certain booksellers;" and certainly his unfortunate experiences with Longman and with Murray warranted the experiment, especially as the condition of the Edinburgh house at the time was thoroughly sound, and full of promise. His alliances with two of the first houses in London having failed, he was not inclined to risk a third attempt of the same kind. He may also have felt that, as Murray was encouraging a rival house in Edinburgh, the law of retaliation entitled him to carry the war into the enemy's country. However this may have been, the London house was opened early in 1809. Before it had been a year in existence Mr. Park, the managing partner, died; and as no satisfactory arrangement could be made for carrying it on, it was soon afterwards dissolved. The *Edinburgh Review* was once more transferred to agents (Messrs. White, Cochrane, and Co.), with whom it remained until it went home again to the Longmans, in 1814. Changes followed in the Edinburgh house. A. G. Hunter retired in 1811. Mr. Cathcart, one of his successors in the firm, died in 1812, and from that date till the failure in 1826, Constable's sole partner was Robert Cadell, his future son-in-law.

Other events, having a momentous bearing on Constable's future, had meantime been transpiring. In 1811 Scott had gratified his pride by the purchase of Abbotsford—then a small estate of 150 acres, afterwards increased by Scott's successive purchases to upwards of 1,000 acres. Thus Scott completed his tale of "Four P's"—printer, publisher, proprietor, and poet—and entered on that career, which, however brilliant outwardly, was in some respects a mere "game of speculation." His foolish ambition to make Abbotsford a big place, and himself a "country gentleman all of the olden time," led him into endless extravagance, in the building and furnishing of his house, as well as in the purchase of land. Nor did he always buy land on the most advantageous terms. His desire to widen his borders soon became known. And when it appeared that Scott had set his heart on a neighbouring patch, the owner thereof set his price on it accordingly. His grand schemes always required more ready money than he could command, even when his income was at its largest. With that view his printing business had to be pushed, sometimes even at the expense of his vantage ground as the most popular author of his time.

Thus in negotiating with Constable for the publication of "The Lord of the Isles," in 1814, he suggests that the Longmans should have "half of the whole bargain, that is, half of the agency as well as the property." He fears that they will not be contented with less, and he adds, "You know I have powerful reasons (besides their uniform handsome conduct) for not disobliging them,"—in other words, he could not afford to sacrifice their patronage of James Ballantyne and Co., as printers.

Another shift to which Scott was driven, in order to provide ways and means for realizing his extravagant ideas was, as we have already said, contracting and receiving payment for works afterwards to be written. In a paper, prepared in 1826, by Mr. Alexander Cowan, the trustee appointed by the creditors of Constable and Co., "nine distinct claims are brought against Sir Walter Scott's estate, on account of contracts pending or unfulfilled." (iii. 442.) From a letter of Cadell's written in January, 1826, on the eve of the failure, it appears that the advances made on three of these hypothetical works—fictions, in a double sense—amounted to £7,600. The negotiations were still further complicated by these payments being made in bills.

The embroilment did not stop here. The trade in legitimate bills—if bills for value not received, not even in existence, can be called legitimate—having been found insufficient, recourse was had to accommodation bills—wind-bills, pure and simple. In 1848 Mr. Thomas Constable asked Sir James Gibson-Craig, a man of sterling worth, who had been the agent and adviser of Messrs. Constable and Co. before and during the crisis, to state in writing his recollection of the origin of the system of accommodation-bills which had proved so disastrous to his father and to Sir Walter Scott. The following is the material part of Sir James's reply:—

I remember perfectly your father showing me a letter [1813] from Sir Walter Scott, written in great distress, informing him that his affairs were in such a state that he must call a meeting of his creditors, and requesting your father to do so.

After consulting with me, your father wrote Sir Walter that he hoped it would be unnecessary to call a meeting, and that if he would come to Edinburgh he thought he could devise means for avoiding so disagreeable a measure.

Sir Walter came, and by your father's ad-

vice, he applied to the Duke of Buccleuch to assist him in raising money by annuity, which he did to the amount, I think, of £4,000.

Your father proposed that Sir Walter should engage to write works for the press; on the faith of which your father agreed to give him bills to a very considerable extent, and he accordingly did so.

I believe this was the first transaction in bills Sir Walter and your father had. These transactions afterwards gradually extended to a large amount, and it became their practice that Constable and Co. should give bills to Sir Walter, which he discounted; and, as a counter-security, Sir Walter gave similar sums [in bills] to the company, of which the company made no use.

After this had gone on for some time, your father became very uneasy, and wished to put an end to the dangerous system in which he had embarked; and he told me that he had gone to Sir Walter [in 1825], taking with him all the bills he had received, and proposed to Sir Walter to give up these bills, on Sir Walter returning those Constable and Co. had given him.

Sir Walter said he could not possibly do so [having already discounted them]; on which your father told [him] that in that case he could not meet the engagements for Sir Walter without discounting the bills granted by him. This was accordingly done, and led to discounting to an immense amount a double set of bills, which could not fail to produce, and did actually produce, the ruin of both parties. (iii. 456, 457.)

In coming now to review these events in their more direct bearing on Constable's career, the opening paragraph of the above letter carries us back to the year 1813, and to circumstances which had a momentous influence on the subsequent history of Constable's house. In that year, Scott's publishing concern (John Ballantyne and Co.), started in 1809 in connection with the Murray alliance, was involved in difficulties so great that Scott, as we have just seen, thought it would be necessary to call a meeting of his creditors. In less than a year the Murray connection had been dissolved; and Scott in his extremity bethought him of his old friend Constable, of whose sagacity and prudence he had always, in spite of political differences, entertained and expressed the highest opinion. To Constable accordingly he appealed, though there had been a coldness between them since the rupture in 1809; and the charmer charmed so wisely that Constable could not resist the temptation.

Well had it been for him if he had resisted. Never did conscience or prudence whisper to any man the warning, *obsta principii*, more reasonably, than when

on this occasion we may suppose it to have hinted caution to the ambitious publisher. But the "still small voice" was disregarded. Constable was flattered and captivated by the thought of the "darling wizard of the north" returning to his embraces. He at once took over stock to the amount of £2,000, which he resold to the trade at a loss of 50 per cent., and "by his sagacious advice," Lockhart says, "enabled the distressed partners to procure similar assistance at the hands of others, who did not partake his own feelings of personal kindness and sympathy." It is not to be denied that Constable did much at this time out of the goodness of his heart. When Lockhart gives him credit for "personal kindness and sympathy," we may be sure that there was warrant for it. At the same time it is difficult to believe that he would have incurred positive pecuniary loss for these considerations. He might have given advice, he might have helped them in many ways; but we cannot see that he would have been warranted in sacrificing £1,000 (and for aught he knew it might have been more), unless he could calculate on deriving from the transaction some ultimate gain. And the gain on which he reckoned evidently was, bringing Scott under obligations which would attach him to Constable's house. Writing to his partner on 17th June, 1813, Constable says he has "no sort of wish to be rapid in being either off or on" with Scott's proposals. Writing again on the 21st June, he thus summarizes a new letter from Scott, "which rather perplexes" him. "He (Scott) makes two distinct propositions, and adds that in the event of neither being accepted, he must apply to Longman and Co. and Murray." Scott knew full well how to "govern the ventages" of his "recorder."

Constable's services did not end here. A few months later, a further advance became necessary; the publishing house was still "a labouring concern." Scott had recorded but a short time previously his decided repugnance to a renewal of his alliance with Constable, saying that his objections would yield only "to absolute necessity, or to very strong grounds of advantage," and he added, "I am persuaded nothing ultimately good can be expected from any connection with that house, unless for those who have a mind to be hewers of wood and drawers of water." Yet he has again recourse to Constable, and by his aid and

counsel Scott is enabled to open a credit account with Constable's London bankers, the Duke of Buccleuch being his secretary.

This was in the meantime a great triumph for Constable's diplomacy. Once more Scott was his friend, bound to him by the strong tie of obligation; and as the Longman alliance had been renewed a short time previously, Constable's position seemed to be at its strongest. In the following year "Waverley" was published, and a new and prosperous career opened up before both author and publishers. But a dark shadow clouded their bright prospects; that was "accommodation." Constable and Ballantyne had been accustomed to deal in accommodation bills for small sums before the breach in 1808. The practice was resumed very soon after the reconciliation in 1813; and before the end of 1814, Constable's house had become "seriously embarrassed by the extent of accommodation afforded to Mr. Scott." Their bankers remonstrate with Cadell, and Cadell remonstrates with Constable, expressing his wish to pay them off and get rid of the connection. Constable acquiesces so far. "We must cut all connection *that is possible* with the Ballantynes and Mr. Scott;" but he is evidently chary of offending the latter, by whom he thinks "we are this next half-year to be benefited greatly." At the same time his situation is "certainly deplorable," and he would give anything to escape from it. By-and-by, however, he comes to take a more hopeful view of matters. He has not the same horror of "assisting credit" as his partner. "If the thing [their business] is still going on prosperously, why should we experience GREATLY LIMITED ACCOMMODATION?"

Constable, however, was not to have it all his own way. The circumstances attending the publication of "Guy Mannering," in 1815, exhibit Scott in a sorry light, and show that the whole affair was a complicated game of chess, from which "dodging" was not excluded. "Guy Mannering" was published, not in Edinburgh, but in London. The reasons which led to this are bluntly expressed by Scott in a letter to John Ballantyne. It was necessary, he said, "to propitiate the Leviathans of Paternoster-row;" and he added, "my reason for letting them have this scent of roast meat is in case it should be necessary for us to apply to them to renew bills in Decem-

ber." Thus did Scott prostitute his great intellect to suit the exigencies of his bill-book. The only condition he made was that Constable should have the Scottish sale.

This plan of "extending the sphere of his publishing relations" having succeeded so well, Scott resolved to adopt the general principle of making new and good stock carry off old and heavy. Lockhart condemns the practice as unfair to Constable, gives John Ballantyne the credit of proposing it, and blames him for concealing from Scott the extent of his obligation to Constable in enabling the house to carry on. But it is only too plain from the correspondence that the idea originated with Scott himself, and that it was at his instance that the plan was extended. Longman having been "propitiated" with "Guy Mannering," it was resolved to attack Murray next. Accordingly in 1816, the first series of "The Tales of My Landlord" was offered to Murray and Blackwood, who agreed to all the author's conditions, and also relieved John Ballantyne and Co. of stock to the value of £500.

These lessons were not thrown away on Constable, who, when the second series of "The Tales of My Landlord" was about to be published, expressed a hope that they might be produced under the same auspices with "Rob Roy," which had been published by him in the interval. Taking advantage of his eagerness, Ballantyne told him that it would only be given "to publishers who should agree to take with it *the whole* of the remaining stock of 'John Ballantyne and Co.'" Constable, Lockhart says, was "so worked upon by his jealous feelings," that he at once agreed to the extravagant terms, "and at one sweep cleared the Augean stable in Hanover-street of unsalable rubbish to the amount of £5,270." According to Lockhart, this transaction was concluded in November, 1817. Mr. Thomas Constable, proceeding on a letter of Cadell's in January, 1818, is of opinion that the clearance was not made till a later period. There is no doubt, however, that it was made, and that it was prompted by the considerations above referred to; for in the conclusion of his letter Mr. Cadell says, "We will thus lay a strong claim on the author of the novels to prefer us to all others in time coming."

Constable and Co. were now fairly in the toils. Scott's "dodges" had entirely succeeded; and they had sold themselves,

soul and body, to the author of "Waverley." So matters continued till the end; but our space will not allow us to go into details.

'Twere long to tell, and sad to trace,
The path from glory to disgrace.

One thing is plain, that Scott's publishers always had present to their minds the fear of his being carried off by rival publishers, as he had been in 1815 and in 1816. Thus Robinson, Constable's London agent, writing to him in 1822, says: "Nothing is so clear as that the author of 'Waverley' should hold his hand for a year or two; but this fancy can't be attempted without great danger that he might be induced to offer some new work to Murray or Longman." It is now sufficiently plain, surely, that this inordinate fear of rivalry was the bugbear which haunted Constable through his whole life, and which led him into the extravagances and indiscreet speculations which ultimately ruined him. In the end of 1822, the difficulties of the firm seemed to Mr. Cadell to be insuperable, and he proposed to save himself by a dissolution of partnership. His scruples were, however, overcome; and "despite all difficulties, their vessel, under skilful steerage, moved gallantly forward, amid shoals of bills, and quicksands of accommodation—the anticipated profits of contracts unfulfilled. But for the wreck of another craft, with whose crew they had unhappily become too closely connected, their ship might ere long have glided into smoother water." This is, at the least, doubtful; but it is a case in which few will be inclined to deny the plaintiff the benefit of the doubt.

The "craft" referred to is that of Hurst, Robinson, and Co., Constable's London agents. The speculative mania of 1824, and the commercial crisis of 1825, are matters of history. Robinson had embarked largely in the bubble schemes of the day. He lost heavily, and appealed to Constable for help. Constable was so entirely dependent on wind-credit, that he could render no substantial assistance. Scott was appealed to, to give his name for a large sum, which might have prevented the immediate crash; but Scott refused. The crash came. Robinson fell. He brought down Constable; and with him fell Ballantyne, and of course Scott.

No one, surely, can say that the result was surprising. It was the natural consequence of the game which the chief

parties concerned had been playing during the previous fifteen years. The wonder is that it lasted so long. It is not difficult now to see—and the publication of Constable's memoir enables us to see more clearly than before—wherein each of the unfortunate sufferers erred, and to apportion the blame accordingly. No one will be inclined to judge Scott harshly. Love of the man, appreciation of his splendid genius, and admiration of the noble heroism which led him, at the sacrifice of his life, to make a stupendous effort to redeem his credit, alike prevent this. But the truth must be spoken. And the truth is that Scott the man of business, as distinguished from Scott the author of "Waverley," allowed himself to be driven, by his pecuniary necessities—all of which had their origin in his ambition to become a great Border laird—into a system of shifts, and feints, and dodges, which were barely consistent with commercial morality. No doubt he received yeoman service in these proceedings from the Ballantynes, both of whom—but John in particular—were quite as reckless as he was. Scott is as much to be blamed for having allowed himself to be played upon, as for playing, as he did. The fact, however, is that Scott dominated the literary market, and used the power which that position gave him with his eyes open; and it is truly pitiable to see, as we have seen, a man of Scott's genius condescending to the trick of playing off first Murray, and then Longman, against Constable—giving them, as he coarsely expressed it, "a smell of the roast meat"—for the avowed purpose of securing an extension of accommodation.

Such being the forces with which Constable had to contend, his position becomes quite intelligible. His great and consuming weakness was his determination, at all hazards, to keep fast hold of Scott. In his infatuated desire to keep his adversary's king in perpetual check, he sacrificed all his men, and exposed his own position beyond hope of reclaim. This, and nothing else, led him to clear John Ballantyne's Augean stable, and to grant to the Ballantynes, and to Scott himself, unlimited accommodation. This induced him to contract with Scott for works which were so entirely *in nubibus*, that some of them had not been entered on when the final crash came. This was the absorbing idea which led him to disregard alike the remonstrances of his bankers, and the apprehensions of his

astute but selfish partner, Robert Cadell. It was this charmed bond, moreover, that chained him to his London agents, with whom at the last he found that he must either stand or fall.

Well had it been for Archibald Constable had he acted on the principles which, profiting perhaps by his sad experience, the brothers Chambers adopted for their guidance. "At the outset," says William Chambers, in his interesting and instructive memoir* of his brother, "we laid down these rules, which were inflexibly maintained. Never to take credit, but to pay for all the great elements of trade in ready money; never to give a bill, and never to discount one; and never to undertake any enterprise for which means were not prepared. Obviously by no other plan of operations could we have been freed from anxiety, and at liberty to make use of the leisure at our disposal." And when a great and trying crisis in their London agency came in 1852, it was their recollection of the calamity "of Scott and the Ballantynes" that led them at once, though at tremendous loss, remorselessly to cut away the diseased member.

Constable's misfortunes, however, should not blind us to the services which he rendered to literature. Great innovators have generally been great martyrs. And though Constable fell a martyr to an idea, that idea, in his struggle to attain it, went far to establish the glorious freedom of authorship, which is a marked feature of our time. More than this, even Lockhart was forced to admit, before he died, that Constable's dream of a popular literature which should count its supporters, not by hundreds but by thousands, not by thousands but by millions, had already begun to be realized. How fully that dream has been realized since his day, in spite of the "chaff" and ridicule with which Lockhart, and, if we are to believe him, Scott also, at first received its narration, no man living probably knows better than William Chambers.

* "Memoir of Robert Chambers, with Autobiographical Reminiscences of William Chambers," p. 298. (Edinburgh, 1872.)

From Blackwood's Magazine.

THE STORY OF VALENTINE; AND HIS BROTHER.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHEN Dick saw his friend and patron come down to the rafts that evening in company with another of the "gentlemen," bigger, stronger, and older than himself, at whom everybody looked with respect and admiration, the state of his mind may be supposed. He had been hanging about all day, as I have said, making himself useful—a handy fellow, ready to push a boat into the water, to run and fetch an oar, to tie on the sheepskin on a rower's seat, without standing on ceremony as to who told him to do so. The master himself, in the hurry of operations, had given him various orders without perceiving, so willing and ready was Dick, that it was a stranger, and not one of his own men, whom he addressed. Dick contemplated the conversation which ensued with a beating heart. He saw the lads look round, and that Valentine pointed him out to the potentate of the river-side; and he saw one of the men join in, saying something, he was sure, in his favour; and, after a terrible interval of suspense, Val came towards him, waving his hand to him in triumph. "There," cried Val, "we've got you the place. Go and talk to old Harry yourself about wages and things. And mind what I said to you, Brown; neither Lichen nor I will stand any nonsense. We've made all sorts of promises for you; and if you don't keep them, Lichen will kick you—or if he don't, I will. You'd best keep steady, for your own sake."

"I'll keep steady," said Dick, with a grin on his face; and it was all the boy could do to keep himself from executing a dance of triumph when he found himself really engaged at reasonable wages, and informed of the hour at which he was expected to present himself on the morrow. "Give an eye to my boat, Brown," said Val; "see she's taken care of. I'll expect you to look out for me, and have her ready when you know I'm coming. I hate waiting," said the lad, with impetuous good-humour. How Dick admired him as he stood there in his flannels and jersey—the handsomest, splendid, all-commanding young prince, who had stooped from his skies to interfere on his (Dick's) behalf, for no reason in the world except his will and pleasure. "How lucky I am," thought Dick to himself, "that he should have noticed

me last night!"—and he made all manner of enthusiastic promises on account of the boat, and in general devotion to Val's service. The young potentate took all these protestations in the very best part. He stepped into his outrigger with lordly composure, while Dick, all glowing and happy, knelt on the raft to hold it. "You shan't want a friend, old fellow, as long as you behave yourself," said Val, with magnificent condescension which it was fine to see. "I'll look after you," and he nodded at him as he shot along over the gleaming water. As for Dick, as his services were not required till next day, he went across the river to Coffin Lane, where his mother was waiting for him, to tell his news. She did not say very much, nor did he expect her to do so, but she took him by the arm and led him along the water-side to a house which stood in a corner, half facing the river, looking towards the sunset. She took him in at the open door, and upstairs to the room in which she had already set out a homely and very scanty table for their supper. Dick did not know how to express the delight and thanks in his heart. He turned round and gave his mother a kiss in silent transport—a rare caress, such as meant more than words. The window of this room looked up the river, and straight into the "Brocas clump," behind which the sunset was preparing all its splendour. In the little room beyond, which was to be Dick's bedroom—glorious title!—the window looked straight across to the rafts. I do not think that any young squire coming into a fine property was ever more happy than the young tramp finding himself for almost the first time in his life in a place which he could call home. He could not stop smiling, so full of happiness was he, nor seat himself to his poor supper, but went round and round the two rooms, planning where he could put up a shelf or arrange a table. "I'll make it so handy for you, mother; you'll not know you're born!" cried Dick, in the fulness of his delight.

And yet two barer little rooms perhaps no human home ever was made in. There was nothing there that was not indispensable—a table, two chairs, and no more; and in Dick's room a small iron bed. All that his mother possessed for her own rest was a mattress, which could be rolled up and put aside during the day. She took her son's pleasure very quietly, as was her wont, but smiled with a sense of having made him happy, which

was pleasant to her, although to make him happy had not been her only motive. When she had put away the things from their supper, she sat down at the open window and looked out on the river. The air was full of sound, so softened by the summer that all rudeness and harshness were taken out of it: in the foreground the ferry-boat was crossing and recrossing, the man standing up with his punt-pole against the glow of the western sky; just under the window lay the green eyot, waving with young willows, and up and down in a continual stream on the sunny side of it went and came the boys in their boats. "Show him to me, Dick, when he comes," said the woman. Dick did not require to be told whom she meant, neither was he surprised at this intensity of interest in *him*, which made his young patron the only figure worth identification in that crowded scene. Had he not been, as it were, Dick's guardian angel, who had suddenly appeared for the boy's succour?—and what more natural than that Dick's mother should desire before anything else to see one who had been such a friend to her boy?

But I do not think she was much the wiser when Val came down the river, accompanied by a group of backers on the bank, who had made themselves hoarse shrieking and shouting at him. He was training for a race, and this was one of his trial nights. Lichen himself had agreed to come down to give Val his advice and instructions—or, in more familiar phraseology, was "coaching" him for the important effort. Dick rushed out at the sight, to cheer and shriek too, in an effervescence of loyalty which had nothing to do with the character of Val's performance. The mother sat at the window and looked out upon them, longing and sickening with a desire unsatisfied. Was this all she was ever to see of him—a distant speck in a flying boat? But to know that this was him—that he was there before her eyes—that he had taken up Dick and established him in his own train, as it were, near to him, by a sudden fancy which to her, who knew what cause there was for it, seemed something like a special interference of God,—filled her with a strange confused rapture of mingled feelings. She let her tears fall quietly as she sat all alone, gazing upon the scene. It must be God's doing, she felt, since no man had any hand in it. She had separated them in her wild justice, rendering

her own heart while she did so, but God had brought them together. She was totally untaught, poor soul, in religious matters, as well as in everything else; but in her ignorance she had reached that point which our high philosophy reaches struggling through the mist, and which nowadays the unsatisfied and over-instructed mind loves to go back to, thinking itself happier with one naked primary truth than with a system however divine. No one could have taken from this dweller in the woods and wilds the sense of a God in the world,—almost half visible, sometimes, to musing, silent souls like her own; a God always watchful, always comprehensible to the simple mind, in the mere fact of His perpetual watchfulness, fatherliness, yet severity,—sending hunger and cold as well as warmth and plenty, and guiding those revolutions of the seasons and the outdoor facts of existence which impress the untaught yet thoughtful being as nothing learnt by books can ever do. To know as she did that there was a God in the world, and not believe at the same time that His interference was the most natural of all things, would have been impossible to this primitive creature. Therefore, knowing no agencies in the universe but that of man direct and visible, and that of God, which to her could scarcely be called invisible, she believed unhesitatingly that God had done this—that He had barked her, with a hand and power more great than hers. What was to be the next step she could not tell,—it was beyond her: she could only sit and watch how things would befall, having not only no power but no wish to interfere.

Thus things went on for the remaining portion of the “half,” which lasted only about six weeks more. Dick set himself to the work of making everything “handy” for her with enthusiasm in his odd hours, which were few—for his services at the rafts were demanded imperatively from earliest morning till the late evening after sunset, when the river dropped into darkness. “The gentlemen,” it is true, were all cleared off their favourite stream by nine o’clock; but the local lovers of the Thames would linger on it during those summer nights, especially when there was a moon, till poor Dick, putting himself across in his boat when all at last was silent—the last boating party disposed of, and the small craft all ranged in their places ready for to-morrow—would feel his arms scarcely able to pull

the light sculls, and his limbs trembling under him. Even then, after his long day’s work, when he had eaten his supper, he would set to work to put up the shelves he had promised his mother, or to fix upon his walls the pictures which delighted himself. Dick began with the lowest rudiments of art, the pictures in the penny papers, with which he almost papered his walls. Then his taste advanced as his pennies grew more plentiful: the emotional prints of the “Police News” ceased to charm him, and he rose to the pictures of the “Illustrated,” or whatever might be the picture-paper of the time. This advance—so quickly does the mind work—took place in the six weeks that remained of the half; and by the time “the gentlemen” left, and work slackened, Dick’s room was already gorgeous, with here and there a mighty chromo, strong in tint and simple in subject, surrounded with all manner of royal progresses and shows of various kinds, as represented in the columns of the prints aforesaid. He grew handy, too, in amateur carpentering, having managed to buy himself some simple tools; and when he had a spare moment he betook himself to the bits of simple carving which Ross had handed over to him, and worked at them with a real enjoyment which proved his possession of some germ at least of artistic feeling. The boy never had a moment unemployed with all these occupations, necessary and voluntary. He was as happy as the day was long, always ready with a smile and pleasant word, always sociable, not given to calculating his time too nicely, or to grumbling if some of his “mates” threw upon his willing shoulders more than his share of work. The boating people about got to know him, and among the boys he had already become highly popular. Very grand personages indeed—Lichen himself, for instance, than whom there could be no more exalted being—would talk to him familiarly; and some kind lads, finding out his tastes, brought him pictures of which they themselves had got tired, and little carved brackets from their walls, and much other rubbish of this description, all of which was delightful to Dick.

As for Valentine, the effect produced upon him by the possession of a *protégé* was very striking. He felt the responsibility deeply, and at once began to ponder as to the duties of a superior to his inferiors, of which, of course, one time or other, he had heard much. An

anxious desire to do his duty to this re-tainer who had been so oddly thrown upon his hands, and for whom he felt an unaccountable warmth of patronizing friendship, took possession of him. He made many trite but admirable theories on the subject — theories, however, not at all trite to Val, who believed he had invented them for his own good and that of mankind. It was not enough, he reasoned with himself, to have saved a lad from the life of a tramp, and got him regular employment, unless at the same time you did something towards improving his mind, and training him for the rôle of a respectable citizen. These were very fine words, but Val (strictly within himself) was not afraid of fine words. No young soul of sixteen worth anything ever is. To make a worthy citizen of his waif seemed to him for some time his mission. Having found out that Dick could read, he pondered very deeply and carefully what books to get for him, and how to lead him upon the path of knowledge. With a little sigh he recognized the fact that there was no marked literary turn in Dick's mind, and that he preferred a bit of wood and a knife as a means of relaxation to books. Val hesitated long between the profitable and the pleasant in literature as a means of educating his *protégé*. Whether to rouse him to the practical by accounts of machinery and manufactures, or to rouse his imagination by romance, he could not easily decide. I fear his decision was biased ultimately by the possession of a number of books which he had himself outgrown, but which he rightly judged might do very well for his humble friend, whose total want of education made him younger than Val by a few years, and therefore still within the range of the "Headless Horseman," of Captain Mayne Reid's vigorous productions, and other schoolboy literature of the same class. These he brought down, a few volumes at a time, to the rafts, and gave them to his friend with injunctions to read them. "You shall have something better when you have gone through these; but I daresay you'll like them — I used to myself," said Val. Dick accepted them with devout respect; but I think the greatest pleasure he got out of them was when he ranged them in a little book-shelf he had himself made, and felt as a bibliophile does when he arranges his fine editions, that he too had a library. Dick did not care much for the stories of adventure with which Val fed him as a

kind of milk for babes. He knew of adventures on the road, of bivouacs out of doors, quite enough in his own person. But he dearly liked to see them ranged in his book-shelf. All kinds of curious instincts, half developed and unintelligible even to himself, were in Dick's mind, — the habits of a race of which he knew nothing — partially burnt out and effaced by a course of life infinitely different, yet still existing obstinately within him, and prompting him to he knew not what. If we could study human nature as we study fossils and strata, how strange it would be to trace the connection between Dick's rude book-shelves, with the coarse little ornament he had carved on them, and the pleasure it gave him to range Val's yellow volumes upon that rough shelf — and the great glorious green cabinets in Lady Eskside's drawing-room! Nobody was aware of this connection, himself least of all. And Val, who had an evident right to inherit so refined a taste, cared as little for the Vernis-Martin as though he had been born a savage; by such strange laws, unknown to us poor gropers after scraps of information, does inheritance go!

All this time, however, Dick's mother had not seen Val more than in his boat, for which she looked through all the sunny afternoons and long evenings, spending half her silent intent life, so different to the outward one, so full of strange self-absorption and concentrated feeling, in the watch. This something out of herself, to attract her wandering visionary thoughts and hold her passionate heart fast, was what the woman had wanted throughout the strange existence which had been warped and twisted out of all possibility at its very outset. Her wild intolerance of confinement, her desire for freedom, her instinct of constant wandering, troubled her no more. She did her few domestic duties in the morning, made ready Dick's meals for him (and they lived with Spartan simplicity, both having been trained to eat what they could get, most often by the roadside — cold scraps of food which required no preparation), and kept his clothes and her own in order; and all the long afternoon would sit there watching for the skimming boat, the white jersey, with the distinctive mark which she soon came to recognize. I think Val's jersey had a little red cross on the breast — an easy symbol to recollect. When he came down the river at last, and left his boat, she went in with a sigh,

half of relief, from her watch, half of pain that it was over, and began to prepare her boy's supper. They held her whole existence thus in suspense between them; one utterly ignorant of it, the other not much better informed. When Dick came in, tired but cheery, he would show her the books Mr. Ross had brought him, or report to her the words he had said. Dick adored him frankly, with a boy's pride in all his escapades; and there were few facts in Val's existence which were not known in that little house at the corner, all unconscious as he was of his importance there. One morning, however, Dick approached this unfailing subject with a little embarrassment, looking furtively at his mother to see how far he might venture to speak.

"You don't ever touch the cards now, mother?" he said all at once, with a guilty air, which she, absorbed in her own thoughts, did not perceive.

"The cards?—I never did when I could help it, you know."

"I know," he said, "but I don't suppose there's no harm in it; it ain't you as put them how they come. All you've got to do with it is saying what it means. Folks in the Bible did the same—Joseph, for one, as was carried to the land of Egypt."

The Bible was all the lore Dick had. He liked the Old Testament a great deal better than the "Headless Horseman;" and, like other well-informed persons, he was glad to let his knowledge appear when there was an occasion for such exhibitions. His mother shook her head.

"It's no harm, maybe, to them that think no harm," she said; "no, it ain't me that settles them—who is it? It must be either God or the devil. And God don't trouble Himself with the like of that—He has more and better to do; so it must be the devil; and I don't hold with it, unless I'm forced for a living. I can't think as it's laid to you then."

"I wish you'd just do it once to please me, mother; it couldn't do no harm."

She shook her head, but looked at him with questioning eyes.

"Suppose it was to please a gentleman as I am more in debt to than I can ever pay—more than I want ever to pay," cried Dick, "except in doing everything to please him as long as I live. You may say it ain't me as can do this, and that I'm taking it out of you; but you're all I have to help me, and it ain't to save myself. Mother, it's Mr. Ross as has heard somehow how clever you are; and if you

would do it just once to please him and me!"

She did not answer for a few minutes. Dick thought she was struggling with herself to overcome her repugnance. Then she replied, with an altered and agitated voice, "For him I'll do it—you can bring him to-morrow."

"How kind you are, mother!" said Dick, gratefully. "College breaks up the day after to-morrow," he added in a dolorous voice. "I don't know what I shall do without him and all of them—the place won't look the same, nor I shan't feel the same. Mayn't he come to-night? I think he's going off to-morrow up to Scotland, as they're all talking of. Half of 'em goes up to Scotland. I wonder what kind of a place it is. Were we ever there?"

"Once—when you were quite a child."

"'Twas there the tother little chap died?" said Dick, compassionately. "Poor mammy, I didn't mean to vex you. I wonder what he'd have been like now if he'd lived. Look here, mother, mayn't he come to-night?"

"If you like," she said, trying to seem calm, but deeply agitated by this reference. He saw this, and set it down naturally to the melancholy recollections he had evoked.

"Poor mother," he said, rising from his dinner, "you *are* a feelin' one! all this time, and you've never forgotten. I'll go away and leave you quiet; and just before lock-up, when it's getting dark, him and me will come across. You won't say nothing you can help that's dreadful if the cards turn up bad?—and speak as kind to him as you can, mother dear, he's been so kind to me."

Speak as kind to him as you can! What words were these to be said to her whose whole being was disturbed and excited by the idea of seeing this stranger! Keep yourself from falling at his feet and kissing them; from falling on his neck and weeping over him. If Dick had but known, these were more likely things to happen. She scarcely saw her boy go out, or could distinguish what were the last words he said to her. Her heart was full of the other—the other whose face her hungry eyes had not been able to distinguish from her window, who had never seen her, so far as he knew, and yet who was hers, though she dared not say so, dared not claim any share in him. Dared not! though she could not have told why. To her there were barriers between them impassible. She had given him up when

he was a child for the sake of justice, and the wild natural virtue and honour in her soul stood between her and the child she had relinquished. It seemed to her that in giving him up she had come under a solemn tacit engagement never to make herself known to him, and she was too profoundly agitated now to be able to think. Indeed I do not think that reasonable sober thought, built upon just foundations, was ever possible to her. She could muse and brood, and did so, and had done so,—doing little else for many a silent year; and she could sit still, mentally, and allow her imagination and mind to be taken possession of by a tumult of fancy and feeling, which drew her now and then to a hasty decision, and which, had she been questioned on the subject, she would have called thinking—as, indeed, it stands for thinking with many of us. It had been this confused working in her of recollection and of a fanciful remorse which had determined her to give up Valentine to his father; and now that old fever seemed to have come back again, and to boil in her veins. I don't know if she had seriously regretted her decision then, or if she had ever allowed herself to think of it as a thing that could have been helped, or that might still be remedied. But by this time, at least, she had come to feel that it never could be remedied, and that Valentine Ross, Lord Eskside's heir, could never be carried off to the woods and fields as her son, as perhaps a child might have been. He was a gentleman now, she felt with a forlorn pride, which mingled strangely with the anguish of absolute loss with which she realized the distance between them,—the tremendous and uncrossable gulf between his state and hers. He was her son, yet never could know her, never acknowledge her,—and she was to speak with him that night.

The sun had begun to sink, before, starting up from her long and agitated musing, the womanish idea struck her of making some preparations for his reception, arranging her poor room and her person to make as favourable an impression as possible upon the young prince who was her own child. What was she to do? She had been a gentleman's wife once, though for so short a time; and sometimes of late this recollection had come strongly to her mind, with a sensation of curious pride which was new to her. Now she made an effort to recall that strange chapter in her life, when she

had lived among beautiful things, and worn beautiful dresses, and might have learned what gentlemen like. She had never seen Val sufficiently near to distinguish his features, and oddly enough, ignoring the likeness of her husband which was in Dick, expected to find in Valentine another Richard, and instinctively concluded that his tastes must be what his father's were. After a short pause of consideration she went to a trunk, which she had lately sent for to the vagrant headquarters, where it had been kept for her for years—a trunk containing some relics of that departed life in which she had been “a lady.” Out of this she took a little shawl embroidered in silken garlands, and which had faded into colours even more tasteful and sweet than they were in their newest glories—a shawl for which Mr. Grinder, or any other *dilettante* in Eton, would have given her almost anything she liked to ask. This she threw over a rough table of Dick's making, and placed on it some flowers in a homely little vase, of coarse material yet graceful shape. Here, too, she placed a book or two drawn from the same repository of treasures—books in rich faded binding, chiefly poetry, which Richard had given her in his early folly. The small table, with its rich cover, its bright flowers and gilded books, looked like a little altar of fancy and grace in the bare room; it was indeed an altar dedicated to the memory of the past, to the pleasure of the unknown.

When she had arranged this touching and simple piece of incongruity, she proceeded to dress herself. She took off her printed gown and put on a black one, which also came out of her trunk. She put aside the printed handkerchief which she usually wore, tramp fashion, on her head, and brushed out her long beautiful black hair, in which there was not one white thread. Why should there have been? She was not more than thirty-five or thirty-six, though she looked older. She twisted her hair in great coils round her head—a kind of coiffure which I think the poor creature remembered Richard had liked. Her appearance was strangely changed when she had made this simple toilet. She looked like some wild half-savage princess condemned to exile and penury, deprived of her retinue and familiar pomp, but not of her natural dignity. The form of her fine head, the turn of her graceful shoulders, had not been visible in her tramp dress. When she had done everything

she could think of to perfect the effect which she prepared, poor soul, so carefully, she sat down, with what calm she could muster, to wait for her boys. Her boys, her children, the two who had come into the world at one birth, had lain in her arms together, but who now were as unconscious of the relationship, and as far divided, as if worlds had lain between them! Indeed she was quite calm and still to outward appearance, having acquired that power of perfect external self-restraint which many passionate natures possess, though her heart beat loud in her head and ears, performing a whole muffled orchestra of wild music. Had any stranger spoken to her she would not have heard; had any one come in, except the two she was expecting, I do not think she would have seen them, she was so utterly absorbed in one thought.

At last she heard the sound of their steps coming up-stairs. The light had begun to wane in the west, and a purple tone of half darkness had come into the golden air of the evening. She stood up mechanically, not knowing what she was doing, and the next moment two figures stood before her — one well known, her familiar boy, — the other! Was this the other? A strange sensation, half of pleasure, half of disappointment, shot through her at sight of his face.

Val had come in carelessly enough, taking off his hat, but with the ease of a superior. He stopped short, however, when he saw the altogether unexpected appearance of the woman who was Dick's mother. He felt a curious thrill come into his veins — of surprise, he thought. "I beg your pardon," he said; "I — hope you don't mind my coming? Brown said you wouldn't mind."

"You are very welcome, sir," she said, her voice trembling in spite of her. "If there is anything I can do for you. You have been so kind — to my boy."

"Oh," said Val, embarrassed, with a shy laugh, "it pays to be kind to Brown. He's done us credit. I say — what a nice place you've got here!"

He was looking almost with consternation at the beautiful embroidery and the books. Where could they have picked up such things? He was half impressed and half alarmed, he could not have told why. He put out a furtive hand and clutched at Dick's arm. "I say, do you think she minds?" Val had never been so shy in his life.

"You want me to tell you your for-

tune sir?" she said, recovering a little. "I don't hold with it; but I'll do it if you wish it. I'll do it — once — and for you."

"Oh, thanks, awfully," cried Val, more and more taken aback — "if you're sure you don't mind:" and he held out his hand with a certain timidity most unusual to him. She took it suddenly in both hers by an uncontrollable movement, held it fast, gazed at it earnestly, and bent down her head, as if she would have kissed it. Val felt her hands tremble, and her agitation was so evident that both the boys were moved to unutterable wonder; somehow, I think the one of them who wondered least was Valentine, upon whom this trembling eager grasp made the strongest impression. He felt as if the tears were coming to his eyes, but could not tell why.

"It is not the hand I thought to see," she said, as if speaking to herself — "not the hand I thought." Then dropping it suddenly, with an air of bewilderment, she said hastily, "It is not by the hand I do it, but by the cards."

"I ought to have crossed my hand with silver, shouldn't I?" said Val, trying to laugh; but he was excited too.

"No, no," she said tremulously; "no, no — my boy's mother can take none of your silver. Are you as fond of him as he is fond of you?"

"Mother!" cried Dick, amazed at the presumption of this inquiry.

"Well — fond?" said Val, doubtfully; "yes, really I think I am, after all, though I'm sure I don't know why. He should have been a gentleman. Mrs. Brown, I am afraid it is getting near lock-up."

"My name is not Mrs. Brown," she said, quickly.

"Oh, isn't it? I beg your pardon," said Val. "I thought as he was Brown — Mrs. —?"

"There's no Miss nor Missis among my folks. They call me Myra — Forest Myra," she said, hastily. "Dick, give me the cards, and I will do my best."

But Dick was sadly distressed to see that his mother was not doing her best. She turned the cards about, and murmured some of the usual jargon about fair men and dark women, and news to receive, and journeys to go. But she was not herself: either the fortune was so very bad that she was afraid to reveal it, or else something strange must have happened to her. She threw them down at last impatiently, and fixed her intent eyes upon Valentine's face.

"If you have all the good I wish you, you'll be happy indeed," she said; "but I can't do nothing to-night. Sometimes the power leaves us." Then she put her hand lightly on his shoulder, and gazed at him beseechingly. "Will you come again?" she said.

"Oh, yes," said Val, relieved. He drew a step back, with a sense of having escaped. "I don't mind, you know, at all," he said; "it was nothing but a joke. But I'll come again with pleasure. I say, what have you done to that carving, Brown?"

How glad Val was to get away from her touch, and from her intent eyes! and yet he did not want to go away. He hastened to the other end of the room with Dick, who was glad also to find that the perplexing interview was at an end, and got out his bit of carving with great relief. Val stood for a long time (as they all thought) side by side with the other, laying their heads together, the light locks and the dark — talking both together, as boys do; and felt himself calm down, but with a sense that something strange had happened to him, something more than he could understand. The mother sat down on her chair, her limbs no longer able to sustain her. She was glad, too, that it was over — glad and sad, and so shaken with conflicting emotions, that she scarcely knew what was going on. Her heart sounded in her ears like great waves; and through a strange mist in her eyes, and the gathering twilight, she saw vaguely, dimly, the two beside her. Oh, if she could but have put her arms round them and kissed them both together! But she could not. She sat down silent among the shadows, a shadow herself, against the evening light, and saw them in a mist, and held her peace.

"You did not tell me your mother was a lady," said Val, as the two went back together through the soft dusk to the river-side. "I never knew it," said wondering Dick; "I never thought it — till to-night."

"Ah, but I am sure of it," said Val. "I thought you couldn't be a cad, Brown, or I should not have taken to you like this. She's a lady, sure enough; and what's more," he added, with an embarrassed laugh, "I feel as if I had known her somewhere — before — I suppose, before I was born!"

From Fraser's Magazine.

MR. RUSKIN'S RECENT WRITINGS.

BY LESLIE STEPHEN.

THE world is out of joint. The songs of triumph over peace and progress which were so popular a few years ago have been quenched in gloomy silence. It is difficult even to take up a newspaper without coming upon painful forebodings of the future. Peace has not come down upon the world, and there is more demand for swords than for ploughshares. The nations are glaring at each other distrustfully, muttering ominous threats, and arming themselves to the teeth. Their mechanical skill is absorbed in devising more efficient means of mutual destruction, and the growth of material wealth is scarcely able to support the burden of warlike preparations. The internal politics of states are not much more reassuring than their external relations. If the republic triumphs in France and Spain it is not because reason has supplanted prejudice, but because nobody, except a few Carlists or Communists, believes enough in any principles to fight for them. In the promised land of political speculators, the government of the country is more and more becoming a mere branch of stockjobbing. Everywhere the division between classes widens instead of narrowing; and the most important phenomenon in recent English politics is that the old social bonds have snapped asunder amongst the classes least accessible to revolutionary impulses. Absorbed in such contests, we fail to attend to matters of the most vital importance. The health of the population is lowered as greater masses are daily collected in huge cities, where all the laws of sanitary science are studiously disregarded. Everywhere we see a generation growing up sordid, degraded, and void of self-respect. The old beauty of life has departed. A labourer is no longer a man who takes a pride in his work and obeys a code of manners appropriate to his station in life. He restlessly aims at aping his superiors, and loses his own solid merits without acquiring their refinement. If the workman has no sense of duty to his employer, the employer forgets in his turn that he has any duty except to grow rich. He complains of the exorbitant demands of his subordinates, and tries to indemnify himself by cheating his equals. What can we expect in art or in literature from such a social order except that which we

see? The old spontaneous impulse has departed. Our rising poets and artists are a puny generation who either console themselves for their impotence by masquerading in the clothes of their predecessors or take refuge in a miserable epicureanism which calls all pleasures equally good and prefers those sensual enjoyments which are most suited to stimulate a jaded appetite. Religion is corrupted at the core. With some it is a mere homage to the respectabilities; with others a mere superstition, which claims to be pretty but scarcely dares even to assert that it is true; some revolt against all religious teaching, and others almost openly advocate a belief in lies; everywhere the professed creeds of men are divorced from their really serious speculations.

Those who would apply a remedy to these evils generally take one of two lines: they propose that we should humbly submit to outworn authority, or preach the consoling gospel that if we will let everything systematically alone things will somehow all come right. As if things had not been let alone! When we listen to the pedants and the preachers of the day, can we not sympathize with Shakespeare's weariness

Of art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly doctor-like controlling skill,
And simple faith miscalled simplicity,
And captive good attending captive ill?

"Tired of all these," where are we to find consolation? Most of us are content, and perhaps wisely, to work on in our own little spheres, and put up with such results as can fall to the share of a solitary unit in this chaotic world. We may reflect, if we please, that there never was a time since the world began at which evil was not rampant and wise men in a small minority; and that somehow or other we have in the American phrase "worried through" it, and rather improved than otherwise. There are advantages to be set against all the triumphant mischiefs which make wise men cry out, *Vanitas vanitatum!* and enthusiasts may find a bright side to the more ominous phenomena and look forward to that millennium which is always to begin the day after to-morrow. We have cultivated statistics of late, and at least one of our teachers has thought that the new gospel lay in that direction; but we have not yet succeeded in presenting in a tabular form all the good and all the evil which is to be found in the world, and in

striking a balance between them. The problem is too complex for most of us; and it may be as well to give it up, and, without swaggering over progress, or uselessly saddening ourselves over decay, do our best to swell the right side of the account. Most men, however, judge according to temperament. The cheerful philosopher sees in the difference between the actual state of the world and the ideal which he can frame for himself, a guarantee for the approach of a better day. The melancholy philosopher sees in the same contrast a proof of the natural corruption of mankind. He puts the golden age behind instead of before; and, like his rival, attributes to the observation of external events what is merely the expression of his own character.

No one, at any rate, will deny that the clouds are thick enough to justify many gloomy prognostications. Take a man of unusual if not morbid sensibility, and place him in the midst of the jostling, struggling, unsavoury, and unreasonable crowd; suppose him to have a love of all natural and artistic beauty, which is outraged at every moment by the prevailing ugliness; a sincere hatred for all the meanness and imposture too characteristic of modern life; a determination to see things for himself, which involves an antipathy to all the established commonplaces of contented respectability; an eloquence and imaginative force which transuses his prose with poetry, though his mind is too discursive to express itself in the poetical form; and a keen logical faculty hampered by a constitutional irritability which prevents his teaching from taking a systematic form; let him give free vent to all the annoyance and the indignation naturally produced by his position, and you will have a general impression of Mr. Ruskin's later writings. One seems almost to be listening to the cries of a man of genius, placed in a pillory to be pelted by a thick-skinned mob, and urged by a sense of his helplessness to utter the bitterest taunts that he can invent. Amongst the weaknesses natural to such a temperament is the disposition to attach an undue value to what other people would describe as crotchets; and amongst Mr. Ruskin's crotchets are certain theories which involve the publication of his works in such a manner as to oppose the greatest obstacles to their circulation.* It is due

* The monthly numbers of Mr. Ruskin's *Fora Clavigera* are to be obtained for the sum of tenpence each

partly to this cause, and partly to the fact that people do not like to be called rogues, cheats, liars, and hypocrites, that Mr. Ruskin's recent writings, and especially his *Fors Clavigera*, the monthly manifesto in which he denounces modern society, have not received the notice which they deserve. The British public is content to ticket Mr. Ruskin as an oddity, and to pass by with as little attention as possible. And yet the *Fors Clavigera* (the meaning of the title may be found in the second number) would be worth reading if only as a literary curiosity. It is a strange mixture of autobiographical sketches, of vehement denunciation of modern crimes and follies, of keen literary and artistic criticism, of economical controversy, of fanciful etymologies, strained allegories, questionable interpretations of history, and remarks upon things in general, in which passages of great force and beauty are curiously blended with much that, to say the least, is of inferior value, and in which digression is as much the rule as in *Tristram Shandy* or Southey's *Doctor*. Even Mr. Ruskin's disciples seem at times to be a little puzzled by his utterances, and especially by a certain receipt for making a "Yorkshire Goose Pie," which suddenly intrudes itself into one of his numbers, and may or may not cover a profound allegory. Nothing would be easier, and nothing would be more superfluous, than to ridicule many of the opinions which he throws out, or to condemn them from the point of view of orthodox science or political economy. It seems to be more desirable to call attention to the strength than to the weakness of teaching opposed to all current opinions, and therefore more sure to be refuted than to gain a fair hearing. When a gentleman begins by informing his readers that he would like to destroy most of the railroads in England and all the railroads in Wales, the new town of Edinburgh, the north suburb of Geneva, and the city of New York, he places himself in a position which is simply bewildering to the ordinary British mind. Without claiming to be an adequate interpreter, and still less an adequate critic, of all his theories, I may venture a few remarks upon some of the characteristic qualities of *Fors* and others of his recent writings.

Mr. Ruskin, as I have said, is at war with modern society. He sometimes ex-

presses himself in language which, but for his own assurances to the contrary, might be taken for the utterance of furious passion rather than calm reflection. "It seems to be the appointed function of the nineteenth century," he says, "to exhibit in all things the elect pattern of perfect folly, for a warning to the furthest future." The only hope for us is in one of the "forms of ruin which necessarily cut a nation down to the ground and leave it, thence to sprout again, if there be any life left for it in the earth, or any lesson teachable to it by adversity." And after informing his Oxford hearers that we are, in the sphere of art at any rate, "false and base," "absolutely without imagination and without virtue," he adds that his language is not, as they may fancy, unjustifiably violent, but "temperate and accurate" — except in shortcoming of blame." Indeed, if Mr. Ruskin's habitual statements be well founded, the world has become well nigh uninhabitable by decent people. Lot would be puzzled to discover a residue of righteous men sufficient to redeem us from speedy destruction. In the preface to a collected edition of his works, he tells us that in his natural temper he has sympathy with Marmontel; in his "enforced and accidental temper, and thoughts of things and people, with Dean Swift." No man could make a sadder avowal than is implied in a claim of sympathy with the great man who now rests where his heart is no longer lacerated by *sava indignatio*. Neither, if one may correct a self-drawn portrait, can the analogy be accepted without many deductions. Swift's misanthropy is very different in quality from Mr. Ruskin's. It is less "accidental," and incomparably deeper. Misanthropy, indeed, is altogether the wrong word to express the temper with which Mr. Ruskin regards the world. He believes in the capacity of men for happiness and purity, though some strange perversity has jarred the whole social order. He can believe in heroes and in unsophisticated human beings, and does not hold that all virtue is a sham, and selfishness and sensuality the only moving forces of the world. Swift's concentrated bitterness indicates a mind in which the very roots of all illusions have been extirpated. Mr. Ruskin can still cherish a faint belief in a possible Utopia, which to the Dean would have appeared to be a silly dream, worthy of the philosophers of Laputa. The more masculine character of Swift's

mind makes him capable of accepting a view of the world which helped to drive even him mad, and which would have been simply intolerable to a man of more delicate fibre. Some light must be admitted to the horizon, or refuge would have to be sought in the cultivation of sheer cynical insensibility. Mr. Ruskin has not descended to those awful depths, and we should have been more inclined to compare his protest against modern life with the protest of Rousseau. The old-fashioned declamations against luxury may be easily translated into Mr. Ruskin's language about the modern worship of wealth; and if he does not talk about an ideal "state of nature," he is equally anxious to meet corruption by returning to a simpler order of society. Both writers would oppose the simple and healthy life of a primitive population of peasants to the demoralized and disorganized masses of our great towns. Mr. Ruskin finds his "ideal of felicity actually produced in the Tyrol." There, a few years ago, he met "as merry and round a person" as he ever desires to see: "he was tidily dressed, not in brown rags, but in green velvet; he wore a jaunty hat, with a feather in it, a little on one side; he was not drunk, but the effervescence of his thorough good humour filled the room all about him; and he could sing like a robin." Many travellers who have seen such a phenomenon, and mentally compared him with the British agricultural labourer, whose grievances are slowly becoming articulate, must have had some searchings of heart as to the advantages of the modern civilization. Is the poor cramped population of our fields, or the brutal population which heaves half-bricks at strangers in the mining districts, or the effete population which skulks about back slums and our casual wards, the kind of human article naturally turned out by our manufacturing and commercial industry?

The problem about which all manner of Social Science Associations have been puzzling themselves for a great many years essentially comes to this; and Mr. Ruskin answers it passionately enough. The sight and the sound of all the evils which affect the world is too much for him. "I am not," he says, "an unselfish person nor an evangelical one; I have no particular pleasure in doing good, nor do I dislike doing it so much as to expect to be rewarded for it in another world. But I simply cannot paint, nor read, nor look at minerals, nor do anything else

that I like, and the very light of the morning sky, when there is any — which is seldom now-a-days near London — has become hateful to me, because of the misery which I know of and see signs of when I know it not, which no imagination can interpret too bitterly." There is evil enough under the sun to justify any fierceness of indignation; and we should be less disposed to quarrel with Mr. Ruskin for cherishing his anger than for squandering so valuable an article so rashly. He suffers from a kind of mental incontinence which weakens the force of his writing. He strikes at evil too fiercely and rapidly to strike effectually. He wrote the *Modern Painters*, as he tells us in a characteristic preface to the last edition, not from love of fame, for then he would have compressed his writing, nor from love of immediate popularity, for then he would have given fine words instead of solid thought, but simply because he could not help it. He saw an injustice being done, and could not help flying straight in the faces of the evildoers. It is easy to reply that he ought to have helped it. In that case the book might have become a symmetrical whole instead of being only what it is — the book which, in spite of incoherence and utter absence of concentration, has done more than any other of its kind to stimulate thought and disperse antiquated fallacies. But we must take Mr. Ruskin as he is. He might, perhaps, have been a leader; he is content to be a brilliant partisan in a random guerilla warfare, and therefore to win partial victories, to disgust many people whom he might have conciliated, and to consort with all manner of superficial and untrained schemers, instead of taking part in more systematic operations. Nobody is more sensible than Mr. Ruskin of the value of discipline, order, and subordination. Unfortunately the ideas of every existing party happen to be fundamentally wrong, and he is therefore obliged in spite of himself to fight for his own hand.

Men who revolt against the world in this unqualified fashion are generally subject to two imputations. They are eccentric by definition; and their eccentricity is generally complicated by sentimentalism. They are, it is suggested, under the dominion of an excessive sensibility which bursts all restraints of logic and common sense. The worst of all qualifications for fighting the world is to be so thin-skinned as to be unable to accept compromise or to submit contentedly to

inevitable evils. In Mr. Ruskin's case, it is suggested, the foundation of this exaggerated tone of feeling is to be found in his exquisite sense of the beautiful. He always looks upon the world more or less from an artistic point of view. Whatever may be our other claims to superiority over our ancestors, nobody can deny that the world has become ugly. We may be more scientific than the ancient Greeks; but we are undoubtedly mere children to them in art, or rather, mere decrepit and effete old men. We could no more build a Parthenon or make a statue fit to be set by the Elgin marbles, than they could build ironclads or solve problems by modern methods of mathematical analysis. Indeed, our superiority in any case is not a superiority of faculty, but simply of inherited results. And thus, if the artistic capacities of a race be the fair measure of its general excellence, that which we call progress should really be called decay. Our eyes have grown dim, and our hands have lost their cunning. Mere mechanical dexterity is but a poor thing to set against the unerring instinct which in old days guided, alike the humblest workman and the most cultivated artist. The point at issue appears in one of Mr. Ruskin's controversies. According to the *Spectator*, Mr. Ruskin wished the country to become poor in order that it might thrive in an artistic sense. "If," it said, "we must choose between a Titian and a Lancashire cotton-mill, then in the name of manhood and of morality give us the cotton-mill;" and it proceeded to add that only "the dilettantism of the studio" would make a different choice. Mr. Ruskin, that is, is an effeminate person who has so fallen in love with the glories of Venetian colouring and Greek sculpture that he would summarily sweep away all that makes men comfortable to give them a chance of recovering the lost power. Let us burn our mills, close our coal-mines, and tear up our railways, and perhaps we may learn in time to paint a few decently good pictures. Nobody in whom the artistic faculties had not been cultivated till the whole moral fibre was softened would buy good art at such a sacrifice.

Up to a certain point, I imagine that Mr. Ruskin would accept the statement. He does prefer Titians to cotton-mills, and he does think that the possession of cotton-mills is incompatible with the production of Titians. He hates machinery as an artist; he hates the mechanical

repetition of vulgar forms, whether in architecture or "dry goods," which takes the place of the old work where every form speaks of a living hand and eye behind it. He hates steamboats because they come puffing and screaming, and sending their whistles through his head like a knife when he is meditating on the loveliness of a picture in the once silent Venice. He hates railways because they destroy all natural beauty. There was once a rocky valley between Buxton and Bakewell, where you might have seen Apollo and the Muses "walking in fair procession on the lawns of it, and to and fro among the pinnacles of its crags." But you—the stupid British public, to wit—thought that you could make money of it; "you enterprized a railroad through the valley—you blasted its rocks away, heaped thousands of tons of shale into its lovely stream. The valley is gone, and the gods with it; and now, every fool in Buxton can be at Bakewell in half an hour, and every fool in Bakewell at Buxton; which you think a lucrative process of exchange; you fools everywhere." The beauty of English landscape is everywhere defaced by coal-smoke, and the purity of English streams defiled by refuse. Meanwhile the perfection of the mechanical contrivance which passes for art in England is typified by an ingenious performance ticketed "No. 1" in the South Kensington Museum. It is a statue in black and white marble of a Newfoundland dog, which Mr. Ruskin pronounces to be, accurately speaking, the "most perfectly and roundly ill-done thing" which he has ever seen produced in art. Its makers had seen "Roman work and Florentine work and Byzantine work and Gothic work; and misunderstanding of everything had passed through them as the mud does through earthworms, and here at last was their wormcast of a production." Mere mechanical dexterity has absolutely supplanted artistic skill.

Well, you reply, we must take the good with the bad. We give up the Newfoundland dog; but if steam-whistles go through your head in Venice, and the railway drives the gods from Derbyshire, you must remember that a number of poor Englishmen and Italians, who never cared much for scenery or for pictures, enjoy a common-place pleasure which they must else have gone without. Increased command of the natural forces means increased comfort to millions at the cost of a little sentimental enjoyment

for thousands. But it is precisely here that Mr. Ruskin would join issue with the optimists. The lesson which he has preached most industriously and most eloquently is the essential connection between good art and sound morality. The first condition of producing good pictures or statues is to be pure, sincere, and innocent. Milton's saying that a man who would write a heroic poem must make his life a heroic poem, is the secret of all artistic excellence. A nation which is content with shams in art will put up with shams in its religious or political or industrial life. We bedaub our flimsy walls with stucco as our statesmen hide their insincerity under platitude. If a people is vile at heart, the persons who minister to its taste will write degraded poetry and perform demoralizing plays, and paint pictures which would revolt the pure-minded. The impudent avowal that the spheres of art and morality should be separate is simply an acceptance of a debased condition of art. And therefore Mr. Ruskin's lectures upon art are apt to pass into moral or religious discourses, as in works professedly dealing with social questions he is apt to regard the artistic test as final. The fact that we cannot produce Titians is a conclusive proof that we must have lost the moral qualities which made a Titian possible; whilst the fact that we can produce a cotton-mill merely shows that we can cheat our customers, and make rubbish on a gigantic scale. An indefinite facility in the multiplication of shoddy is not a matter for exulting self-congratulation. The ugliness of modern life is not due to the disarrangement of certain distinct æsthetic faculties, but the necessary mark of moral insensibility. Cruelty and covetousness are the dominant vices of modern society; and if they have ruined our powers of expression, it is only because they have first corrupted the sentiments which should be expressed in noble art.

The problem is probably more complex than Mr. Ruskin is apt to assume. The attempt to divorce art from morality is indeed as illogical and as mischievous as he assumes. The greater the talent which is prostituted to express base thoughts and gratify prurient tastes, the more it should excite our disgust; and the talent so misused will die out amongst a race which neglects the laws of morality, or, in other words, the primary conditions of physical and spiritual health. The literature of a corrupt race becomes not only immoral but stupid.

And yet the art test is not quite so satisfactory as Mr. Ruskin seems at times to assume. Utter insensibility to beauty and the calmest acquiescence in all manner of ugliness is not incompatible with morality amongst individuals; or what would become of the Dissenters? Hymns which torture a musical ear may express very sincere religious emotion. Of course, we are above the Puritan prejudice which regarded all art as more or less the work of the Devil; but perhaps we are not, and even the really artistic races were not, much better than the Puritans. Indeed, we should take but a sad view of the world if we held that its artistic attainments always measured the moral worth of a nation. No phenomenon in history is more curious than the shortness of the periods during which art has attained any high degree of perfection. There have been only two brief periods, says Mr. Ruskin, in which men could really make first-rate statues, and even then the knowledge was confined to two very small districts. But if our inferiority in that direction to the Greek and the Florentine artists proves that we are equally inferior in a moral sense, we must suppose that virtue is a plant which flowers but once in a thousand years. Probably students of history would agree that virtue was more evenly, and artistic, excellence more unevenly, distributed than we should have conceived possible. Many conditions, not hitherto determined by social philosophers, go to producing this rarest of qualities; and Mr. Ruskin seems often to exaggerate from a tacit assumption that men who cannot paint or carve must necessarily be incapable of speaking the truth, or revering love and purity.

Yet it is not to be denied that the test, when applied with due precaution, may reveal much of the moral character of a nation. The imbecility of our artistic efforts is the index of an unloveliness which infects the national life. We cannot make good music because there is a want of harmony in our creeds, and a constant jarring between the various elements of society. Mr. Ruskin's criticisms of modern life are forcible, though he reasons too much from single cases. The shock which he receives from particular incidents seems to throw him off his balance. He practises the art of saying stinging things, of which the essence is to make particular charges which we feel to be true, whilst we are convinced that the tacit generalization is

unfair. The whistle of the steamboat in Venice sets up such a condition of nervous irritability, that the whole world seems to be filled with its discordant strains. Mr. Ruskin saw one day a well-dressed little boy leaning over Wallingford Bridge, and fancied that he was looking at some pretty bird or insect. Coming up to him, the little boy suddenly crossed the bridge, and took up the same attitude at the opposite parapet; his purpose was to spit from both sides upon the heads of a pleasure party in a passing boat. "The incident may seem to you trivial," says Mr. Ruskin to his hearers; and, in fact, most persons would have been content to box the little boy's ears, and possibly would have consoled themselves with the reflection that, at least, spitting upon Jewish gaberdines is no longer permitted by the police. Mr. Ruskin sees in it a proof of that absence of all due social subordination and all grace of behaviour, which "leaves the insolent spirit and degraded senses to find their only occupation in malice, and their only satisfaction in shame." If the moral be rather too wide for this living fable, Mr. Ruskin has no difficulty in proving from other cases how deeply the ugliness of modern life is rooted in moral insensibility. Here is another spitting scene. As he is drawing the Duomo at Pisa, Mr. Ruskin sees three fellows in rags leaning against the Leaning Tower, and "expectorating loudly and copiously, at intervals of half a minute each, over the white marble base of it, which they evidently conceived to have been constructed only to be spit upon." Is their brutality out of harmony with the lessons taught by their superiors? There is or was a lovely little chapel at Pisa, built for a shrine, seen by the boatmen as they first rose on the surge of the open sea, and bared their heads for a short prayer. In 1840 Mr. Ruskin painted it, when six hundred and ten years had left it perfect; only giving the marble a tempered glow, or touching the sculpture with a softer shade. In a quarter of a century the Italians have grown wiser, and Mr. Ruskin watched a workman calmly striking the old marble cross to pieces. Tourists are supposed to be more appreciative, and Mr. Ruskin travelled to Verona in a railway carriage with two American girls, specimens of the utmost result of the training of the most progressive race in the world. They were travelling through exquisite midsummer sunshine, and the range of Alps was clear from the Lake of

Garda to Cadore. But the two American girls had reduced themselves simply to two "white pieces of putty that could feel pain;" from Venice to Verona they perceived nothing but flies and dust. They read French novels, sucked lemons and sugar, and their whole conversation as to scenery was at a station where the blinds had been drawn up. "Don't those snow-caps make you cool?" "No; I wish they did." Meanwhile, at Rome, the slope of the Aventine, where the wall of Tullus has just been laid bare in perfect preservation, is being sold on building leases. New houses, that is, will be run up by bad workmen, who know nothing of art, and only care for money-making; and whilst "the last vestiges of the heroic works of the Roman monarchy are being destroyed, the base fresco-painting of the worst times of the Empire is being faithfully copied, with perfectly true lascivious instinct, for interior decoration." Lust and vanity are the real moving powers in all this Italian movement. Are we much better in England? Mr. Ruskin was waiting a short time ago at the Furness station, which is so tastefully placed as to be the only object visible over the ruined altar of the Abbey. To him entered a party of workmen who had been refreshing themselves at a tavern established by the Abbot's Chapel. They were dressed in brown rags, smoking pipes, all more or less drunk, and taking very long steps to keep their balance in the direction of motion, whilst laterally securing themselves by hustling the wall or any chance passengers. Such men, as Mr. Ruskin's friend explained to him, would get drunk and would not admire the Abbey; they were not only unmanageable, but implied "the existence of many unmanageable persons before and after them—nay, a long ancestral and filial unmanageableness. They were a fallen race, every way incapable, as I acutely felt, of appreciating the beauty of *Modern Painters* or fathoming the significance of *Fors Clavigera*." What are the amusements and thoughts of such a race, or even of the superior social layers? Go to Margate, a place memorable to Mr. Ruskin for the singular loveliness of its skies; and you may see—or newspaper correspondents exaggerate—a ruffianly crowd insulting the passengers who arrive by steamboat in the most obscene language or bathing with revolting indecency in a promiscuous crowd; or to Glasgow, and you will see the Clyde

turned into a loathsome and stagnant ditch, whilst the poor Glaswegians fancy that they can import learning into their town in a Gothic case, costing 150,000*l.*, which is about as wise as to "put a pyx into a pigsty to make the pigs pious." Or take a walk in the London suburbs. There was once a secluded district with old country houses, and neatly kept cottages with tiled footpaths and porches covered with honeysuckle. Now it is covered with thousands of semi-detached villas built of rotten brick, held together by iron devices. What are the people who inhabit them? The men can write and cast accounts; they make their living by it. The women read story books, dance in a vulgar manner, and play vulgar tunes on the piano; they know nothing of any fine art; they read one magazine on Sundays and another on week days, and know nothing of any other literature. They never take a walk; they cannot garden; the women wear false hair and copy the fashions of Parisian prostitutes; the men have no intellects but for cheating, no pleasures except smoking and eating, and "no ideas or any capacity of forming ideas of anything that has yet been done of great or seen of good in this world."

Truly, this is a lamentable picture, which we may, if we please, set down as a wanton caricature or as a proof that poor Mr. Ruskin is but speaking the truth when he tells us, pathetically enough, of his constant sadness, and declares that he is nearly always out of humour. The exaggeration is to be lamented, because it lessens the force of his criticism. The remark inevitably suggests itself that a fair estimate of modern civilization is hardly to be obtained by the process of cutting out of our newspapers every instance of modern brutality which can be found in police reports, and setting them against the most heroic deeds or thoughts of older times. Bill Sykes may be a greater brute than the Black Prince; but there were Bill Sykeses in the days of the Black Prince, and perhaps a piece of one in the Black Prince himself. Mr. Ruskin, to speak logically, is a little too fond of the induction by simple enumeration in dealing with historical problems. The sinking of the *London* does not prove conclusively that Athenians built more trustworthy ships than Englishmen; and his declamations against the folly and wickedness of modern war, true enough in themselves, cannot make us forget all the massacres, the persecu-

tions, the kidnappings, the sellings into slavery, the sacks of cities, and the laying waste of provinces, of good old times, nor convince us that Grant or Moltke are responsible for worse atrocities than mediæval or classical generals. The complex question of the moral value of different civilizations is not to be settled off-hand by quoting all the striking instances which an acute intellect combined with a fervid imagination and disturbed by an excessive irritability can accumulate in proof of human weakness. The brute survives in us, it is true, but isolated facts do not prove him to be more rampant than of old.

To argue the question, however, would take me far beyond my limits and my knowledge. Rather let us admit at once that Mr. Ruskin has laid his hand upon ugly symptoms. We will not be angry with the physician because he takes too gloomy a view of them, but be grateful to anybody who will expose the evil unsparingly. A pessimist is perhaps, in the long run, more useful than an optimist. The disease exists, whether we think of it as a temporary disorder caused by an unequal development, or as a spreading cancer, threatening a complete dissolution of the organism. Modern society may be passing through a grave crisis to a higher condition, or may be hastening to a catastrophe like that which overwhelmed the ancient world. It is in any case plain enough that the old will not gradually melt into the new, in spite of all the entreaties of epicurean philosophers, but will have to pass through spasms and dangerous convulsions. The incapacity to paint pretty pictures, to which we might submit with tolerable resignation, is indeed a proof of a wide-spread discord, which sometimes seems to threaten the abrupt dislocation of the strongest bonds. Can we explain the cause of the evil in order to apply such remedies as are in our power?

And here I come to that part of Mr. Ruskin's teaching which, to my mind, is the most unfortunate. There is a modern gospel which shows, as he thinks, plain traces of diabolic origin. His general view may be sufficiently indicated by the statement that he utterly abjures Mr. Mill's *Liberty*, and holds Mr. Carlyle to be the one true teacher of modern times. But Mr. Ruskin carries his teaching further. The pet objects of his antipathy are the political economists. He believes that his own writings on political economy are incomparably the great-

est service which he has rendered to mankind, and to establish his own system is to annihilate Ricardo, Mill, and Professor Fawcett. To give any fair account of his views would be to go too far into a very profitless discussion. This much, however, I must venture to say. Mr. Ruskin's polemics against the economists on their own ground appear to me to imply a series of misconceptions. He is, for example, very fond of attacking a doctrine fully explained (as I should say, demonstrated) by Mr. Mill, that demand for commodities is not demand for labour. I confess that I am unable to understand the reasons of his indignation against this unfortunate theorem; and the more so because it seems to me to be at once the most moral doctrine of political economy, and that which Mr. Ruskin should be most anxious to establish. It is simply the right answer to that most enduring fallacy that a rich man benefits his neighbours by profligate luxury. Mandeville's sophistry reappears in Protean shapes to the present day. People still maintain in substance that a man supports the poor as well as pleases himself by spending money on his own personal enjoyment. In this form, indeed, Mr. Ruskin accepts the sound doctrine; but when clothed in the technical language of economists, it seems to act upon him like the proverbial red rag. He is always flying at it and denouncing the palpable blunders of men whose reputation for logical clearness is certainly as good as his own. His indignation seems to blind him and is the source of a series of questionable statements, which I cannot here attempt to unravel. His attack upon the economists is thus diverted into an unfortunate direction. Political economy is, or ought to be, an accurate description of the actual phenomena of the industrial organization of society. It assumes that, as a matter of fact, the great moving force is competition; and traces amongst men the various consequences of that struggle for existence of which Mr. Darwin has described certain results amongst animals. The complex machinery of trade has been developed out of the savage simplicity by internal pressure, much as species on the Darwinian hypothesis have been developed out of more homogeneous races. Now, it is perfectly open for anybody to say that the conditions thus produced are unfavourable to morality at the present day, and that we should look forward to organizing society

on different principles. If Mr. Ruskin had said so much, he would have found allies instead of enemies amongst the best political economists. Mr. Mill agrees, for instance, with Comte, and therefore with Mr. Ruskin, that in a perfectly satisfactory social state capitalists would consider themselves as trustees for public benefit of the wealth at their disposal. They would be captains in an industrial army, and be no more governed by the desire of profit than a general by a desire for prize-money. To bring about such a state of things requires a cultivation of the "altruistic" impulses, which must be the work of many generations to come. But Mr. Ruskin in his wrath attributes to all economists the vulgar interpretation of their doctrines. He calmly assumes that political economists regard their own science as a body of "directions for the gaining of wealth, irrespectively of the consideration of its moral sources." He supposes that they deny that wages can be regulated otherwise than by competition, because they assert that wages are so regulated at present; and that they consider all desires to be equally good because they begin by studying the phenomena of demand and supply without at the same moment considering the moral tendencies implied. He supposes that because, for certain purposes, a thinker abstracts from moral considerations, he denies that moral considerations have any weight. He might as well say that physiology consists of directions for growing fat, or that it is wrong to study the laws of nutrition because they show how poisons may be assimilated as well as good food. Mr. Ruskin's wrath, indeed, is not thrown away, for there are plenty of popular doctrines about political economy which deserve all that he can say against them. I never read a passage in which reference is made to the "inexorable laws of supply and demand," or to "economic science," without preparing myself to encounter a sophistry, and probably an immoral sophistry. To regard the existing order of things as final, and as imposed by irresistible and unalterable conditions, is foolish as well as wrong. The shrewder the blows which Mr. Ruskin can aim at the doctrines that life is to be always a selfish struggle, that adulteration is only a "form of competition," that the only remedy for dishonesty is to let people cheat each other till they are tired of it, the better; and I only regret the exaggeration which enables his

antagonist to charge him with unfairness. But the misfortune is this. On that which I take to be the right theory of political economy, the supposed "inexorable laws" do not, indeed, describe the action of forces as eternal and unalterable as gravitation; but they do describe a certain stage of social development through which we must pass on our road to the millennium. To cast aside the whole existing organization as useless and corrupt is, in the first place, to attempt a Quixotic tilt against windmills, and, in the next place, to deny the existence of the good elements which exist, and are capable of healthy growth. The problem is not to do without all our machinery, whether of the material or of the human kind, but to assign to it its proper place. Mr. Ruskin once said to a minister, who was lamenting the wickedness in our great cities, "Well, then, you must not have large cities." "That," replied his friend, "is an utterly unpractical saying," and I confess that I think the minister was in the right.

Mr. Ruskin, however, is too impatient or too thoroughgoing to accept any compromise with the evil thing. Covetousness, he thinks, is at the root of all modern evils; our current political economy is but the gospel of covetousness; our social forms are merely the external embodiment of our spirit; and our science the servant of our grovelling materialism. We have proved the sun to be a "splendidly permanent railroad accident," and ourselves to be the descendants of monkeys; but we have become blind to the true light from heaven. Away with the whole of the detestable fabric founded in sin, and serving only to shelter misery and cruelty! Before Mr. Ruskin's imagination there has risen a picture of a new society, which shall spring from the ashes of the old, and for which he will do his best to secure some partial realization. He has begun to raise a fund, chiefly by his own contributions, and has already bought a piece of land. These members of the St. George's Company — that is to be the name of the future community — will lead pure and simple lives. They will cultivate the land by manual labour, instead of "huzzing and mazing the blessed fields with the Devil's own team;" the workmen shall be paid fixed wages; the boys shall learn to ride and sail; the girls to spin, weave, sew, and "cook all ordinary food exquisitely;" they shall all know how to sing and be taught mercy to brutes, courtesy to each

other, rigid truth-speaking, and strict obedience. And they shall all learn Latin, and the history of five cities, Athens, Rome, Venice, Florence and London. Leading "contented lives, in pure air, out of the way of unsightly objects, and emancipated from unnecessary mechanical occupation," the little community will possess the first conditions for the cultivation of the great arts; for great art is the expression of a harmonious, noble, and simple society. Let us wish Mr. Ruskin all success; and yet the path he is taking is strewn with too many failures to suggest much hopefulness — even, we fear, to himself. Utopia is not to be gained at a bound; and there will be some trouble in finding appropriate colonists, to say nothing of competent leaders. The ambition is honourable, but one who takes so melancholy a view of modern society as Mr. Ruskin must fear lest the sons of Belial should be too strong for him. We say that truth must prevail, and that all good work lasts. Some of us may believe it, but how can those believe it who see in all past history nothing but a record of dismal failures, of arts flourishing only to decay, and religions rising to be corrupted almost at their source?

What Mr. Ruskin thinks of such matters is perhaps given most forcibly in a singularly eloquent and pathetic lecture, delivered at Dublin, and republished in the first volume of his collected works. The subject is the *Mystery of Life and its Arts*, and it is a comment on the melancholy text, "What is your life? It is even as a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." That truth, which we all have to learn, has been taught to Mr. Ruskin as to others by bitter personal experience. He speaks a little too mournfully, as it may seem to his readers, of his own failures in life. For ten years he tried to make his countrymen understand Turner, and they will not even look at the pictures exhibited in the public galleries. He then laboured more prudently at teaching architecture, and found much sympathy; but the luxury, the mechanism, and the squalid misery of English cities choked the impulse; and he turned from streets of iron and palaces of crystal to the carving of the mountains and the colour of the flower. And still, he says, he could tell of repeated failures; for, indeed, who may not tell of failure who thinks that the seeds sown upon stubborn and weed-choked soil are at once to develop into

perfect plants? The failure, however, whether exaggerated or real, made the mystery of life deeper. All enduring success, he says, arises from a faith in human nature or a belief in immortality; and his own failure was due to a want of sufficiently earnest effort to understand existence or of purpose to apply his knowledge. But the reflection suggested a stranger mystery. The arts prosper only when endeavouring to proclaim Divine truth; and yet they have always failed to proclaim it. Always at their very culminating point they have become "ministers to lust and pride." And we, the hearers, are as apathetic as the teachers. We listen as in a languid dream and care nothing for the revelation that comes. We profess to believe that men are dropping into hell before our faces or rising into heaven; and we don't much care about it, or quite make up our minds one way or the other. Go to the highest and most earnest of religious poets. Milton evidently does not believe his own fictions, consciously adapted from heathen writers; Dante sees a vision of far more intensity; but it is still a vision only; a vision full of grotesque types and fancies, where the doctrines of the Christian Church become subordinate to the praise, and are only to be understood by the help, of a Florentine maiden. Or take men still greater because raised above controversy and strife. What have Homer and Shakespeare to tell us of the meaning of the world? Both of them think of men as the playthings of a mad destiny, where the noblest passions are the means of bringing their heroes to helpless ruin. The Christian poet differs from the heathen chiefly in this, that he recognizes no gods nigh at hand, and that by a petty chance the strongest and most righteous perish without a word of hope. And meanwhile, the wise men of the earth, the statesmen and the merchants, can only tell us to cut each other's throats, or to spend our whole energies in heaping up useless wealth. Turn from the wise men to the humble workers, and we learn a lesson of a kind. The lesson is mainly the old and simple taught in various forms by many men who have felt the painful weight of the great riddle too much for them, that we are to work and hold our tongues. All art consists in the effort to bring a little more order out of chaos; and the sense of failure and imperfection is necessary to stimulate us to the work. Whatever happiness is to be obtained is found in the struggle against

disorder. And yet what has been effected by all the past generations of man? The first of human arts is agriculture, and yet there are unreclaimed deserts in the Alps, the very centre of Europe, which could be redeemed by a year's labour, and which still blast their inhabitants into idiocy. And in India (Mr. Ruskin was referring to the Orissa famine) half a million of people died of hunger, and we could not bring them a few grains of rice. Clothing is the next of the arts, and yet how many of us are even decently clad? And of building, the art which leaves the most enduring remains, nothing is left of the greatest part of all the skill and strength that have been employed but fallen stones to encumber the fields and the streams.

"Must it be always thus?" asks Mr. Ruskin; "is our life forever to be without profit, without possession?" The only answer to be given is a repetition of the old advice, to do what good work we can, and waste as little as possible. By all means let us preach or practise that doctrine, and take such comfort as we can in it; but the mystery remains and presses upon all sensitive minds. That Mr. Ruskin is inclined to deepen its shades, and indeed to take a rather bilious view of the universe, may be inferred from this brief account of his sentiments. Indeed, the common taunt against Calvinism often occurs in a rather different form. Why don't you go mad, it is said, if you really believe that nine-tenths of mankind are destined to unutterable and never-ending torments? But no creed known amongst men can quite remove the burden. The futility of human effort, the rarity of excellence, the utter helplessness of reason to reduce to order the blindly struggling masses of mankind, the waste and decay and confusion which we see around us, are enough to make us hesitate before answering the question, What is the meaning of it all? A sensitive nature, tortured and thrust aside by pachydermatous and apathetic persons, may well be driven to rash revolt and hasty denunciations of society in general. At worst, and granting him to be entirely wrong, he has certainly more claims on our pity than on our contempt. And for a moral, if we must have a moral, we can only remark, that on the whole Mr. Ruskin supplies a fresh illustration of the truth, which has both a cynical and an elevating side to it, that it is amongst the greatest of all blessings to have a thick skin and a sound digestion.

From The Cornhill Magazine.
FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE NEW ACQUAINTANCE DESCRIBED.

IDIOSYNCRASY and vicissitude had combined to stamp Sergeant Troy as an exceptional being.

He was a man to whom memories were an encumbrance, and anticipations a superfluity. Simply feeling, considering, and caring for what was before his eyes, he was vulnerable only in the present. His outlook upon time was as a transient flash of the eye now and then : that projection of consciousness into days gone by and to come, which makes the past a synonym for the pathetic and the future a word for circumspection, was foreign to Troy. With him the past was yesterday ; the future, to-morrow ; never, the day after.

On this account he might, in certain lights, have been regarded as one of the most fortunate of his order. For it may be argued with great plausibility that reminiscence is less an endowment than a disease, and that expectation in its only comfortable form — that of absolute faith — is practically an impossibility ; whilst in the form of hope and the secondary compounds, patience, impatience, resolve, curiosity, it is a constant fluctuation between pleasure and pain.

Sergeant Troy, being entirely innocent of the practice of expectation, was never disappointed. To set against this negative gain there may have been some positive losses from a certain narrowing of the higher tastes and sensations which it entailed. But limitation of the capacity is never recognized as a loss by the loser therefrom : in this attribute moral or æsthetic poverty contrasts plausibly with material, since those who suffer do not see it, whilst those who see it do not suffer. It is not a denial of anything to have been always without it, and what Troy had never enjoyed he did not miss ; but, being fully conscious that what sober people missed he enjoyed, his capacity, though really less, seemed greater than theirs.

He was perfectly truthful towards men, but to women lied like a Cretan — a system of ethics, above all others, calculated to win popularity at the first flush of admission into lively society ; and the possibility of the favour gained being but transient had reference only to the future.

He never passed the line which divides

the spruce vices from the ugly ; and hence, though his morals had never been applauded, disapproval of them had frequently been tempered with a smile. This treatment had led to his becoming a sort of forestaller of other men's experiences of the glorious class, to his own aggrandizement as a Corinthian, rather than to the moral profit of his hearers.

His reason and his propensities had seldom any reciprocating influence, having separated by mutual consent long ago : thence it sometimes happened that, while his intentions were as honourable as could be wished, any particular deed formed a dark background which threw them into fine relief. The Sergeant's vicious phases being the offspring of impulse, and his virtuous phases of cool meditation, the latter had a modest tendency to be oftener heard of than seen.

Troy was full of activity, but his activities were less of a locomotive than a vegetative nature ; and, never being based upon any original choice of foundation or direction, they were exercised on whatever object chance might place in their way. Hence, whilst he sometimes reached the brilliant in speech, because that was spontaneous, he fell below the commonplace in action, from inability to guide incipient effort. He had a quick comprehension and considerable force of character ; but, being without the power to combine them, the comprehension became engaged with trivialities whilst waiting for the will to direct it, and the force wasted itself in useless grooves through unheeding the comprehension.

He was a fairly well-educated man for one of middle class — exceptionally well educated for a common soldier. He spoke fluently and unceasingly. He could in this way be one thing and seem another : for instance, he could speak of love and think of dinner ; call on the husband to look at the wife ; be eager to pay and intend to owe.

The wondrous power of flattery in *passados* at women is a perception so universal as to be remarked upon by many people almost as automatically as they repeat a proverb, or say they are Christians and the like, without thinking much of the enormous corollaries which spring from the proposition. Still less is it acted upon for the good of the complementary being alluded to. With the majority such an opinion is shelved with all those trite aphorisms which require some

catastrophe to bring their tremendous meanings thoroughly home. When expressed with some amount of reflectiveness it seems co-ordinate with a belief that this flattery must be reasonable to be effective. It is to the credit of men that few attempt to settle the question by experiment, and it is for their happiness, perhaps, that accident has never settled it for them. Nevertheless, that the power of a male dissembler, who by the simple process of deluging her with untenable fictions charms the female wisely, becomes limitless and absolute to the extremity of perdition, is a truth taught to many by unsought and wringing occurrences. And some—frequently those who are definable as middle-aged youths, though not always—profess to have attained the same knowledge by other and converse experiences, and jauntily continue their indulgence in such experiences with terrible effect. Sergeant Troy was one. He had been known to observe casually that in dealing with womankind the only alternative to flattery was cursing and swearing. There was no third method. "Treat them fairly, and you are a lost man," he would say.

This person's public appearance in Weatherbury promptly followed his arrival there. A week or two after the shearing, Bathsheba, feeling a nameless relief of spirits on account of Boldwood's absence, approached her hayfields and looked over the hedge towards the hay-makers. They consisted in about equal proportions of gnarled and flexuous forms, the former being the men, the latter the women, who wore tilt bonnets covered with nankeen, which hung in a curtain upon their shoulders. Coggan and Mark Clark were mowing in a less forward meadow, Clark humming a tune to the strokes of his scythe, to which Jan made no attempt to keep time with his. In the first mead they were already loading hay, the women raking it into cocks and windrows, and the men tossing it upon the waggon.

From behind the waggon a bright scarlet spot emerged, and went on loading unconcernedly with the rest. It was the gallant Sergeant, who had come haymaking for pleasure; and nobody could deny that he was doing the mistress of the farm real knight-service by this voluntary contribution of his labour at a busy time.

As soon as she had entered the field Troy saw her, and sticking his pitchfork into the ground and picking up his walk-

ing-cane, he came forward. Bathsheba blushed with half-angry embarrassment, and adjusted her eyes as well as her feet to the direct line of her path.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SCENE ON THE VERGE OF THE HAY-MEAD.

"AH, Miss Everdene!" said the Sergeant, lifting his diminutive cap. "Little did I think it was you I was speaking to the other night. And yet, if I had reflected, the 'Queen of the Corn-market' (truth is truth at any hour of the day or night, and I heard you so named in Casterbridge yesterday), the 'Queen of the Corn-market,' I say, could be no other woman. I step across now to beg your forgiveness a thousand times for having been led by my feelings to express myself too strongly for a stranger. To be sure I am no stranger to the place—I am Sergeant Troy, as I told you, and I have assisted your uncle in these fields no end of times when I was a lad. I have been doing the same for you to-day."

"I suppose I must thank you for that, Sergeant Troy," said the "Queen of the Corn-market," in an indifferently grateful tone.

The Sergeant looked hurt and sad. "Indeed you must not, Miss Everdene," he said. "Why could you think such a thing necessary?"

"I am glad it is not."

"Why? if I may ask without offence."

"Because I don't much want to thank you for anything."

"I am afraid I have made a hole with my tongue that my heart will never mend. Oh these intolerable times; that ill-luck should follow a man for honestly telling a woman she is beautiful! 'Twas the most I said—you must own that; and the least I could say—that I own myself."

"There is some talk I could do without more easily than money."

"Indeed. That remark seems somewhat digressive."

"It means that I would rather have your room than your company."

"And I would rather have curses from you than kisses from any other woman; so I'll stay here."

Bathsheba was absolutely speechless. And yet she could not help giving an interested side-thought to the Sergeant's ingenuity.

"Well," continued Troy, "I suppose

there is a praise which is rudeness, and that may be mine. At the same time there is a treatment which is injustice, and that may be yours. Because a plain blunt man, who has never been taught concealment, speaks out his mind without exactly intending it, he's to be snapped off like the son of a sinner."

"Indeed, there's no such case between us," she said, turning away. "I don't allow strangers to be bold and impudent—even in praise of me."

"Ah—it is not the fact but the method which offends you," he said, sorrowfully. "But I have the sad satisfaction of knowing that my words, whether pleasing or offensive, are unmistakably true. Would you have had me look at you, and tell my acquaintance that you are quite a commonplace woman, to save you the embarrassment of being stared at if they come near you? Not I. I couldn't tell any such ridiculous lie about a beauty to encourage a single woman in England in too excessive a modesty."

"It is all pretence—what you are saying!" exclaimed Bathsheba, laughing in spite of herself at the Sergeant's palpable method. "You have a rare invention, Sergeant Troy. Why couldn't you have passed by me that night, and said nothing?—that was all I meant to reproach you for."

"Because I wasn't going to," he said, smiling. "Half the pleasure of a feeling lies in being able to express it on the spur of the moment, and I let out mine. It would have been just the same if you had been the reverse person—ugly and old—I should have exclaimed about it in the same way."

"How long is it since you have been so afflicted with strong feeling then?"

"Oh, ever since I was big enough to know loveliness from deformity."

"'Tis to be hoped your sense of the difference you speak of doesn't stop at faces, but extends to morals as well."

"I won't speak of morals or religion—my own or anybody else's. Though perhaps I should have been a very good Christian if you pretty women hadn't made me an idolater."

Bathsheba moved on to hide the irrepressible dimplings of merriment. Troy followed entreatingly.

"But—Miss Everdene—you do forgive me?"

"Hardly."

"Why?"

"You say such things."

"I said you were beautiful, and I'll

say so still, for, by —, so you are! The most beautiful ever I saw, or may I fall dead this instant! Why, upon my —"

"Don't—don't! I won't listen to you—you are so profane!" she said, in a restless state between distress at hearing him and a *penchant* to hear more.

"I again say you are a most fascinating woman. There's nothing remarkable in my saying so, is there? I'm sure the fact is evident enough. Miss Everdene, my opinion may be too forcibly let out to please you, and, for the matter of that, too insignificant to convince you, but surely it is honest, and why can't it be excused?"

"Because it—it isn't a correct one," she femininely murmured.

"Oh fie—fie! Am I any worse for breaking the third of that Terrible Ten than you for breaking the ninth?"

"Well, it doesn't seem *quite* true to me that I am fascinating," she replied evasively.

"Not so to you: then I say with all respect that, if so, it is owing to your modesty, Miss Everdene. But surely you must have been told by everybody of what everybody notices? and you should take their words for it."

"They don't say so, exactly."

"Oh yes, they must!"

"Well, I mean to my face, as you do," she went on, allowing herself to be further lured into a conversation that intention had rigorously forbidden.

"But you know they think so?"

"No—that is—I certainly have heard Liddy say they do, but . . ." She paused.

Capitulation—that was the purport of the simple reply, guarded as it was—capitulation, unknown to herself. Never did a fragile tailless sentence convey a more perfect meaning. The careless Sergeant smiled within himself, and probably the devil smiled too from a loophole in Tophet, for the moment was the turning-point of a career. Her tone and mien signified beyond mistake that the seed which was to lift the foundation had taken root in the chink: the remainder was a mere question of time and natural seriate changes.

"There the truth comes out!" said the soldier, in reply. "Never tell me that a young lady can live in a buzz of admiration without knowing something about it. Ah, well, Miss Everdene, you are—pardon my blunt way—you are rather an injury to our race than otherwise."

"How — indeed?" she said, opening her eyes.

"Oh, it is true enough. I may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb (an old country saying, not of much account, but it will do for a rough soldier), and so I will speak my mind, regardless of your pleasure, and without hope or intending to get your pardon. Why, Miss Everdene, it is in this manner that your good looks may do more harm than good in the world." [The Sergeant looked down the mead in pained abstraction.] "Probably some one man on an average falls in love with each ordinary woman. She can marry him: he is content, and leads a useful life. Such women as you a hundred men always covet — your eyes will bewitch scores on scores into an unavailing fancy for you — you can only marry one of that many. Out of these say twenty will endeavour to drown the bitterness of despised love in drink: twenty more will mope away their lives without a wish or attempt to make a mark in the world, because they have no ambition apart from their attachment to you: twenty more — the susceptible person myself possibly among them — will be always dragging after you, getting where they may just see you, doing desperate things. Men are such constant fools! The rest may try to get over their passion with more or less success. But all these men will be saddened. And not only those ninety-nine men, but the ninety-nine women they might have married are saddened with them. There's my tale. That's why I say that a woman so charming as yourself, Miss Everdene, is hardly a blessing to her race."

The handsome Sergeant's features were during this speech as rigid and stern as John Knox's in addressing his gay young queen.

Seeing she made no reply, he said, "Do you read French?"

"No: I began, but when I got to the verbs, father died," she said, simply.

"I do — when I have an opportunity, which latterly has not been often (my mother was a Parisian) — and there's a proverb they have, *Qui aime bien, châtie bien* — He chastens who loves well. Do you understand me?"

"Ah!" she replied, and there was even a little tremulousness in the usually cool girl's voice; "if you can only fight half as winningly as you can talk, you are able to make a pleasure of a bayonet wound!" And then poor Bathsheba instantly perceived her slip in making this

admission: in hastily trying to retrieve it, she went from bad to worse. "Don't, however, suppose that I derive any pleasure from what you tell me."

"I know you do not — I know it perfectly," said Troy, with much hearty conviction on the exterior of his face: and altering the expression to moodiness; "when a dozen men are ready to speak tenderly to you, and give the admiration you deserve without adding the warning you need, it stands to reason that my poor rough-and-ready mixture of praise and blame cannot convey much pleasure. Fool as I may be, I am not so conceited as to suppose that."

"I think you — are conceited, nevertheless," said Bathsheba, hesitatingly, and looking askance at a reed she was fitfully pulling with one hand, having lately grown feverish under the soldier's system of procedure — not because the nature of his cajolery was entirely unperceived, but because its vigor was overwhelming.

"I would not own it to anybody else — nor do I exactly to you. Still, there might have been some self-conceit in my foolish supposition the other night. I knew that what I said in admiration might be an opinion too often forced upon you to give any pleasure, but I certainly did think that the kindness of your nature might prevent you judging an uncontrolled tongue harshly — which you have done — and thinking badly of me, and wounding me this morning, when I am working hard to save your hay."

"Well, you need not think more of that: perhaps you did not mean to be rude to me by speaking out your mind: indeed, I believe you did not," said the shrewd woman, in painfully innocent earnest. "And I thank you for giving help here. But — but mind you don't speak to me again in that way, or in any other, unless I speak to you."

"Oh, Miss Bathsheba! That is too hard!"

"No, it isn't. Why is it?"

"You will never speak to me; for I shall not be here long. I am soon going back again to the miserable monotony of drill — and perhaps our regiment will be ordered out soon. And yet you take away the one little ewe-lamb of pleasure that I have in this dull life of mine. Well, perhaps generosity is not a woman's most marked characteristic."

"When are you going from here?" she asked, with some interest.

"In a month."

"But how can it give you pleasure to speak to me?"

"Can you ask, Miss Everdene — knowing as you do — what my offence is based on?"

"If you do care so much for a silly trifle of that kind, then, I don't mind doing it," she uncertainly and doubtfully answered. "But you can't really care for a word from me? you only say so — I think you only say so."

"That's unjust — but I won't repeat the remark. I am too gratified to get such a mark of your friendship at any price to cavil at the tone. I *do*, Miss Everdene, care for it. You may think a man foolish to want a mere word — just a good morning. Perhaps he is — I don't know. But you have never been a man looking upon a woman, and that woman yourself."

"Well."

"Then you know nothing of what such an experience is like — and Heaven forbid that you ever should."

"Nonsense, flatterer! What is it like? I am interested in knowing."

"Put shortly, it is not being able to think, hear, or look in any direction except one without wretchedness, nor there without torture."

"Ah, Sergeant, it won't do — you are pretending," she said, shaking her head dubiously. "Your words are too dashing to be true."

"I am not, upon the honour of a soldier."

"But *why* is it so? — Of course I ask for mere pastime."

"Because you are so distracting — and I am so distracted."

"You look like it."

"I am indeed."

"Why you only saw me the other night, you stupid man."

"That makes no difference. The lightning works instantaneously. I loved you then, at once — as I do now."

Bathsheba surveyed him curiously, from the feet upward, as high as she liked to venture her glance, which was not quite so high as his eyes.

"You cannot and you don't," she said demurely. "There is no such sudden feeling in people. I won't listen to you any longer. Dear me, I wish I knew what o'clock it is — I am going — I have wasted too much time here already."

The Sergeant looked at his watch and told her. "What, haven't you a watch, Miss?" he enquired.

"I have not just at present — I am about to get a new one."

"No. You shall be given one. Yes — you shall. A gift, Miss Everdene — a gift."

And before she knew what the young man was intending, a heavy gold watch was in her hand.

"It is an unusually good one for a man like me to possess," he quietly said. "That watch has a history. Press the spring and open the back."

She did so.

"What do you see?"

"A crest and a motto."

"A coronet with five points, and beneath, *Cedit amor rebus* — 'Love yields to circumstance.' It's the motto of the Earls of Severn. That watch belonged to the last lord, and was given to my mother's husband, a medical man, for his use till I came of age, when it was to be given to me. It was all the fortune that ever I inherited. That watch has regulated imperial interests in its time — the stately ceremonial, the courtly assignation, pompous travels, and lordly sleeps. Now it is yours."

"But, Sergeant Troy, I cannot take this — I cannot!" she exclaimed, with round-eyed wonder. "A gold watch! What are you doing? Don't be such a dissembler!"

The Sergeant retreated to avoid receiving back his gift, which she held out persistently towards him. Bathsheba followed as he retired.

"Keep it — do, Miss Everdene — keep it!" said the erratic child of impulse.

"The fact of your possessing it makes it worth ten times as much to me. A more plebeian one will answer my purpose just as well, and the pleasure of knowing whose heart my old one beats against — well, I won't speak of that. It is in far worthier hands than ever it has been in before."

"But indeed I can't have it!" she said, in a perfect simmer of distress. "Oh, how can you do such a thing; that is, if you really mean it! Give me your dead father's watch, and such a valuable one! You should not be so reckless, indeed, Sergeant Troy."

"I loved my father: good; but better, I love you more. That's how I can do it," said the Sergeant, with an intonation of such exquisite fidelity to nature that it was evidently not all acted now. Her beauty, which, whilst it had been quiescent, he had praised in jest, had in its

animated phases moved him to earnest ; and though his seriousness was less than she imagined, it was probably more than he imagined himself.

Bathsheba was brimming with agitated bewilderment, and she said, in half-suspicious accents of feeling, "Can it be! Oh, how can it be, that you care for me, and so suddenly! You have seen so little of me: I may not be really so — so nice-looking as I seem to you. Please, do take it; oh, do! I cannot and will not have it. Believe me, your generosity is too great. I have never done you a single kindness, and why should you be so kind to me?"

A factitious reply had been again upon his lips, but it was again suspended, and he looked at her with an arrested eye. The truth was, that as she now stood excited, wild, and honest as the day, her alluring beauty bore out so fully the epithets he had bestowed upon it that he was quite startled at his temerity in advancing them as false. He said mechanically, "Ah, why?" and continued to look at her.

"And my workfolk see me following you about the field, and are wondering. Oh, this is dreadful!" she went on, unconscious of the transmutation she was effecting.

"I did not quite mean you to accept it at first, for it is my one poor patent of nobility," he broke out bluntly; "but, upon my soul, I wish you would now. Without any shamming, come! Don't deny me the happiness of wearing it for my sake? But you are too lovely even to care to be kind as others are."

"No, no; don't say so. I have reasons for reserve which I cannot explain."

"Let it be, then, let it be," he said, receiving back the watch at last; "I must be leaving you now. And will you speak to me for these few weeks of my stay?"

"Indeed I will. Yet, I don't know if I will! Oh, why did you come and disturb me so!"

"Perhaps in setting a gin, I have caught myself. Such things have happened. Well, will you let me work in your fields?" he coaxed.

"Yes, I suppose so; if it is any pleasure to you."

"Miss Everdene, I thank you."

"No, no."

"Good-bye!"

The Sergeant lifted the cap from the slope of his head, bowed, replaced it,

and returned to the distant group of hay-makers.

Bathsheba could not face the haymakers now. Her heart erratically flitting hither and thither from perplexed excitement, hot, and almost tearful, she retreated homewards, murmuring, "Oh, what have I done! what does it mean! I wish I knew how much of it was true!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

HIVING THE BEES.

THE Weatherbury bees were late in their swarming this year. It was in the latter part of June, and the day after the interview with Troy in the hayfield, that Bathsheba was standing in her garden, watching a swarm in the air and guessing their probable settling-place. Not only were they late this year, but unruly. Sometimes throughout a whole season all the swarms would alight on the lowest attainable bough — such as part of a currant-bush or espalier apple-tree; next year they would, with just the same unanimity, make straight off to the uppermost member of some tall, gaunt costard, or quarrington, and there defy all invaders who did not come armed with ladders and staves to take them.

This was the case at present. Bathsheba's eyes, shaded by one hand, were following the ascending multitude against the unexplored stretch of blue till they ultimately halted by one of the unwieldy trees spoken of. A process was observable somewhat analogous to that of alleged formations of the universe, time and times ago. The bustling swarm had swept the sky in a scattered and uniform haze, which now thickened to a nebulous centre: this glided on to a bough and grew still denser, till it formed a solid black spot upon the light.

The men and women being all busily engaged in saving the hay — even Liddy had left the house for the purpose of lending a hand — Bathsheba resolved to hive the bees herself, if possible. She had dressed the hive with herbs and honey, fetched a ladder, brush, and crook, made herself impregnable with an armour of leather gloves, straw hat, and large gauze veil — once green but now faded to snuff colour — and ascended a dozen rungs of the ladder. At once she heard, not ten yards off, a voice that was beginning to have a strange power in agitating her.

"Miss Everdene, let me assist you ;

you should not attempt such a feat alone."

Troy was just opening the garden gate.

Bathsheba flung down the brush, crook, and empty hive, pulled the skirt of her dress tightly round her ankles in a tremendous flurry, and as well as she could slid down the ladder. By the time she reached the bottom Troy was there also, and he stooped to pick up the hive.

"How fortunate I am to have dropped in at this moment!" exclaimed the Sergeant.

She found her voice in a minute. "What! and will you shake them in for me?" she asked, in what, for a defiant girl, was a faltering way; though, for a timid girl, it would have seemed a brave way enough.

"Will I!" said Troy. "Why, of course I will. How blooming you are to-day!" Troy flung down his cane and put his foot on the ladder to ascend.

"But you must have on the veil and gloves, or you'll be stung fearfully!"

"Ah, yes. I must put on the veil and gloves. Will you kindly show me how to fix them properly?"

"And you must have the broad-brimmed hat, too; for your cap has no brim to keep the veil off, and they'd reach your face."

"The broad-brimmed hat, too, by all means."

So a whimsical fate ordered that her hat should be taken off—veil and all attached—and placed upon his head, Troy tossing his own into a gooseberry bush. Then the veil had to be tied at its lower edge round his collar and the gloves put on him.

He looked such an extraordinary object in this guise that, flurried as she was, she could not avoid laughing outright. It was the removal of yet another stake from the palisade of cold manners which had kept him off.

Bathsheba looked on from the ground whilst he was busy sweeping and shaking the bees from the tree, holding up the hive with the other hand for them to fall into. She made use of an unobserved minute whilst his attention was absorbed in the operation to arrange her plumes a little. He came down holding the hive at arm's length, behind which trailed a cloud of bees.

"Upon my life," said Troy, through the veil, "holding up this hive makes one's arm ache worse than a week of sword-exercise." When the manœuvre was complete he approached her. "Would

you be good enough to untie me and let me out? I am nearly stifled inside this silk cage."

To hide her embarrassment during the unwonted process of untying the string about his neck, she said:

"I have never seen that you spoke of."

"What?"

"The sword-exercise."

"Ah! would you like to?" said Troy.

Bathsheba hesitated. She had heard wondrous reports from time to time by dwellers in Weatherbury, who had by chance sojourned awhile in Casterbridge, near the barracks, of this strange and glorious performance, the sword-exercise. Men and boys who had peeped through chinks or over walls into the barrack-yard returned with accounts of its being the most flashing affair conceivable; accoutrements and weapons glistening like stars—here, there, around—yet all by rule and compass. So she said mildly what she felt strongly.

"Yes; I should like to see it very much."

"And so you shall; you shall see me go through it."

"No! How?"

"Let me consider."

"Not with a walking-stick—I don't care to see that. It must be a real sword."

"Yes, I know; and I have no sword here; but I think I could get one by the evening. Now, will you do this?"

Troy bent over her and murmured some suggestion in a low voice.

"Oh, no, indeed!" said Bathsheba, blushing. "Thank you very much, but I couldn't on any account."

"Surely you might? Nobody would know."

She shook her head, but with a weakened negation. "If I were to," she said, "I must bring Liddy, too. Might I not?"

Troy looked far away. "I don't see why you want to bring her," he said coldly.

An unconscious look of assent in Bathsheba's eyes betrayed that something more than his coldness had made her also feel that Liddy would be superfluous in the suggested scene. She had felt it, even whilst making the proposal.

"Well, I won't bring Liddy—and I'll come. But only for a very short time," she added; "a very short time."

"It will not take five minutes," said Troy.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE HOLLOW AMID THE FERNS.

THE hill opposite one end of Bathsheba's dwelling extended into an uncultivated tract of land, covered at this season with tall thickets of brake fern, plump and diaphanous from recent rapid growth, and radiant in hues of clear and untainted green.

At eight o'clock this midsummer evening, whilst the bristling ball of gold in the west still swept the tips of the ferns with its long, luxuriant rays, a soft brushing-by of garments might have been heard among them, and Bathsheba appeared in their midst, their soft, feathery arms caressing her up to her shoulders. She paused, turned, went back over the hill and down again to her own door, whence she cast a farewell glance upon the spot she had just left, having resolved not to remain near the place after all.

She saw a dim spot of artificial red moving round the shoulder of the rise. It disappeared on the other side.

She waited one minute—two minutes—thought of Troy's disappointment at her non-fulfilment of a promised engagement, tossed on her hat again, ran up the garden, clambered over the bank, and followed the original direction. She was now literally trembling and panting at this her temerity in such an errant undertaking; her breath came and went quickly, and her eyes shone with an infrequent light. Yet go she must. She reached the verge of a pit in the middle of the ferns. Troy stood in the bottom, looking up towards her.

"I heard you rustling through the fern before I saw you," he said, coming up and giving her his hand to help her down the slope.

The pit was a hemispherical concave, naturally formed, with a top diameter of about thirty feet, and shallow enough to allow the sunshine to reach their heads. Standing in the centre, the sky overhead was met by a circular horizon of fern: this grew nearly to the bottom of the slope and then abruptly ceased. The middle within the belt of verdure was floored with a thick flossy carpet of moss and grass intermingled, so yielding that the foot was half buried within it.

"Now," said Troy, producing the sword, which, as he raised it into the sunlight, gleamed a sort of greeting, like a living thing, "first, we have four right and four left cuts; four right and four left thrusts. Infantry cuts and guards

are more interesting than ours, to my mind; but they are not so swashing. They have seven cuts and three thrusts. So much as a preliminary. Well, next, our cut one is as if you were sowing your corn—so." Bathsheba saw a sort of rainbow, upside down in the air, and Troy's arm was still again. "Cut two, as if you were hedging—so. Three, as if you were reaping—so. Four, as if you were threshing—in that way. Then the same on the left. The thrusts are these: one, two, three, four, right; one, two, three, four, left." He repeated them. "Have 'em again?" he said. "One, two—"

She hurriedly interrupted: "I'd rather not; though I don't mind your twos and fours; but your ones and threes are terrible!"

"Very well. I'll let you off the ones and threes. Next, cuts, points, and guards altogether." Troy duly exhibited them. "Then there's pursuing practice, in this way." He gave the movements as before. "There, those are the stereotyped forms. The infantry have two most diabolical upward cuts, which we are too humane to use. Like this—three, four."

"How murderous and bloodthirsty!"

"They are rather deathly. Now I'll be more interesting, and let you see some loose play—giving all the cuts and points, infantry and cavalry, quicker than lightning, and as promiscuously—with just enough rule to regulate instinct and yet not to fetter it. You are my antagonist, with this difference from real warfare, that I shall miss you every time by one hair's breadth, or perhaps two. Mind you don't flinch, whatever you do."

"I'll be sure not to!" she said invincibly.

He pointed to about a yard in front of him.

Bathsheba's adventurous spirit was beginning to find some grains of relish in these highly novel proceedings. She took up her position as directed, facing Troy.

"Now just to learn whether you have pluck enough to let me do what I wish, I'll give you a preliminary test."

He flourished the sword by way of introduction number two, and the next thing of which she was conscious was that the point and blade of the sword were darting with a gleam towards her left side, just above her hip; then of their reappearance on her right side, emerging as it were from between her

ribs, having apparently passed through her body. The third item of consciousness was that of seeing the same sword, perfectly clean and free from blood, held vertically in Troy's hand (in the position technically called "recover swords"). All was as quick as electricity.

"Oh!" she cried out in affright, pressing her hand to her side. "Have you run me through?—no, you have not! Whatever have you done!"

"I have not touched you," said Troy quietly. "It was mere sleight of hand. The sword passed behind you. Now you are not afraid, are you? Because if you are I can't perform. I give my word that I will not only not hurt you, but not once touch you."

"I don't think I am afraid. You are quite sure you will not hurt me?"

"Quite sure."

"Is the sword very sharp?"

"Oh no—only stand as still as a statue. Now!"

In an instant the atmosphere was transformed to Bathsheba's eyes. Beams of light caught from the low sun's rays, above, around, in front of her, well-nigh shut out earth and heaven—all emitted in the marvellous evolutions of Troy's reflecting blade, which seemed everywhere at once, and yet nowhere specially. These circumambient gleams were accompanied by a keen sibilation that was almost a whistling—also springing from all sides of her at once. In short, she was enclosed in a firmament of light, and of sharp hisses, resembling a sky-full of meteors close at hand.

Never since the broad-sword became the national weapon, had there been more dexterity shown in its management than by the hands of Sergeant Troy, and never had he been in such splendid temper for the performance as now in the evening sunshine among the ferns with Bathsheba. It may safely be asserted with respect to the closeness of his cuts, that had it been possible for the edge of the sword to leave in the air a permanent substance wherever it flew past, the space left untouched would have been a complete mould of Bathsheba's figure.

Behind the luminous streams of this *aurora militaris*, she could see the hue of Troy's sword-arm, spread in a scarlet haze over the space covered by its motions, like a twanged bowstring, and behind all Troy himself, mostly facing her; sometimes, to show the rear cuts, half turned away, his eye nevertheless always keenly measuring her breadth and out-

line, and his lips tightly closed in sustained effort. Next, his movements lapsed slower, and she could see them individually. The hissing of the sword had ceased, and he stopped entirely.

"That outer loose lock of hair wants tidying," he said, before she had moved or spoken. "Wait: I'll do it for you."

An arc of silver shone on her right side: the sword had descended. The lock dropped to the ground.

"Bravely borne!" said Troy. "You didn't flinch a shade's thickness. Wonderful in a woman!"

"It was because I didn't expect it. O you have spoilt my hair!"

"Only once more."

"No—no! I am afraid of you—indeed I am!" she cried.

"I won't touch you at all—not even your hair. I am only going to kill that caterpillar settling on you. Now: still!"

It appeared that a caterpillar had come from the fern and chosen the front of her bosom as his resting place. She saw the point glisten towards her bosom, and seemingly enter it. Bathsheba closed her eyes in the full persuasion that she was killed at last. However, feeling just as usual, she opened them again.

"There it is, look," said the Sergeant, holding his sword before her eyes.

The caterpillar was spitted upon its point.

"Why it is magic!" said Bathsheba, amazed.

"O no—dexterity. I merely gave point to your bosom where the caterpillar was, and instead of running you through checked the extension a thousandth of an inch short of your surface."

"But how could you chop off a curl of my hair with a sword that has no edge?"

"No edge! This sword will shave like a razor. Look here."

He touched the palm of his hand with the blade, and then, lifting it, showed her a thin shaving of scarf-skin dangling therefrom.

"But you said before beginning that it was blunt and couldn't cut me!"

"That was to get you to stand still, and so ensure your safety. The risk of injuring you through your moving was too great not to compel me to tell you an untruth to obviate it."

She shuddered. "I have been within an inch of my life, and didn't know it!"

"More precisely speaking, you have been within half an inch of being pared alive two hundred and ninety-five times."

"Cruel, cruel, 'tis of you!"

"You have been perfectly safe nevertheless. My sword never errs." And Troy returned the weapon to the scabbard.

Bathsheba, overcome by a hundred tumultuous feelings resulting from the scene, abstractedly sat down on a tuft of heather.

"I must leave you now," said Troy softly. "And I'll venture to take and keep this in remembrance of you."

She saw him stoop to the grass, pick up the winding lock which he had severed from her manifold tresses, twist it round his fingers, unfasten a button in the breast of his coat, and carefully put it inside. She felt powerless to withstand or deny him. He was altogether too much for her, and Bathsheba seemed as one who, facing a reviving wind, finds it to blow so strongly that it stops the breath.

He drew near and said, "I must be leaving you." He drew nearer still. A minute later and she saw his scarlet form disappear amid the ferny thicket, almost in a flash, like a brand swiftly waved.

That minute's interval had brought the blood beating into her face, set her stinging as if aflame to the very hollows of her feet, and enlarged emotion to a compass which quite swamped thought. It had brought upon her a stroke resulting, as did that of Moses in Horeb, in a liquid stream—here a stream of tears. She felt like one who has sinned a great sin.

The circumstance had been the gentle dip of Troy's mouth downward upon her own. He had kissed her.

CHAPTER XXIX.

PARTICULARS OF A TWILIGHT WALK.

WE now see the element of folly distinctly mingling with the many varying particulars which made up the character of Bathsheba Everdene. It was almost foreign to her intrinsic nature. It was introduced as lymph on the dart of Eros, and eventually permeated and coloured her whole constitution. Bathsheba, though she had too much understanding to be entirely governed by her womanliness, had too much womanliness to use her understanding to the best advantage. Perhaps in no minor point does woman astonish her helpmate more than in the strange power she possesses of believing cajoleries that she knows to be false—except, indeed, in that of being utterly

sceptical on strictures that she knows to be true.

Bathsheba loved Troy in the way that only self-reliant women love when they abandon their self-reliance. When a strong woman recklessly throws away her strength she is worse than a weak woman who has never had any strength to throw away. One source of her inadequacy is the novelty of the occasion. She has never had practice in making the best of such a condition. Weakness is doubly weak by being new.

Bathsheba was not conscious of guile in this matter. Though in one sense a woman of the world, it was, after all, that world of day-light coteries, and green carpets, wherein cattle form the passing crowd and winds the busy hum; where a quiet family of rabbits or hares lives on the other side of your party-wall, where your neighbour is everybody in the tything, and where calculation is confined to market-days. Of the fabricated tastes of good fashionable society she knew but little, and of the formulated self-indulgence of bad, nothing at all. Had her utmost thoughts in this direction been distinctly worded (and by herself they never were) they would only have amounted to such a matter as that she felt her impulses to be pleasanter guides than her discretion. Her love was entire as a child's, and though warm as summer it was fresh as spring. Her culpability lay in her making no attempt to control feeling by subtle and careful inquiry into consequences. She could show others the steep and thorny way, but "reck'd not her own rede."

And Troy's deformities lay deep down from a woman's vision, whilst his embellishments were upon the very surface; thus contrasting with homely Oak, whose defects were patent to the blindest, and whose virtues were as metals in a mine.

The difference between love and respect was markedly shown in her conduct. Bathsheba had spoken of her interest in Boldwood with the greatest freedom to Liddy, but she had only communed with her own heart concerning Troy.

All this infatuation Gabriel saw, and was troubled thereby from the time of his daily journey a-field to the time of his return, and on to the small hours of many a night. That he was not beloved had hitherto been his great sorrow; that Bathsheba was getting into the toils was now a sorrow greater than the first, and

one which nearly obscured it. It was a result which paralleled the oft-quoted observation of Hippocrates concerning physical pains.

That is a noble though perhaps an unpromising love which not even the fear of breeding aversion in the bosom of the one beloved can deter from combating his or her errors. Oak determined to speak to his mistress. He would base his appeal on what he considered her unfair treatment of Farmer Boldwood, now absent from home.

An opportunity occurred one evening when she had gone for a short walk by a path through the neighbouring corn-fields. It was dusk when Oak, who had not been far a-field that day, took the same path and met her returning, quite pensively, as he thought.

The wheat was now tall, and the path was narrow; thus the way was quite a sunken groove between the embrowning thicket on either side. Two persons could not walk abreast without damaging the crop, and Oak stood aside to let her pass.

"Oh, is it Gabriel?" she said, "you are taking a walk too. Good night."

"I thought I would come to meet you, as it is rather late," said Oak, turning and following at her heels when she had brushed somewhat quickly by him.

"Thank you, indeed, but I am not very fearful."

"Oh no; but there are bad characters about."

"I never meet them."

Now Oak, with marvellous ingenuity, had been going to introduce the gallant Sergeant through the channel of "bad characters." But all at once the scheme broke down, it suddenly occurring to him that this was rather a clumsy way, and too bare-faced to begin with. He tried another preambule.

"And as the man who would naturally come to meet you is away from home, too—I mean Farmer Boldwood—why, thinks I, I'll go," he said.

"Ah, yes." She walked on without turning her head, and for many steps nothing further was heard from her quarter than the rustle of her dress against the heavy corn-ears. Then she resumed rather tartly:

"I don't quite understand what you meant by saying that Mr. Boldwood would naturally come to meet me."

"I meant on account of the wedding which they say is likely to take place be-

tween you and him, Miss. Forgive my speaking plainly."

"They say what is not true," she returned quickly. "No marriage is likely to take place between us."

Gabriel now put forth his unobscured opinion, for the moment had come. "Well, Miss Everdene," he said, "putting aside what people say, I never in my life saw any courting if his is not courting of you."

Bathsheba would probably have terminated the conversation there and then by flatly forbidding the subject, had not a conscious weakness of position allured her to palter and argue in endeavours to better it.

"Since this subject has been mentioned," she said very emphatically, "I am glad of the opportunity of clearing up a mistake which is very common and very provoking. I didn't definitely promise Mr. Boldwood anything. I have never cared for him. I respect him, and he has urged me to marry him. But I have given him no distinct answer. As soon as he returns I shall do so; and the answer will be that I cannot think of marrying him."

"People are full of mistakes, seemingly."

"They are."

"The other day they said you were trifling with him, and you almost proved that you were not; lately they have said that you are not, and you straightway begin to show—"

"That I am, I suppose you mean."

"Well I hope they speak the truth."

"They do, but wrongly applied. I don't trifle with him, but then, I have nothing to do with him."

Oak was unfortunately led on to speak of Boldwood's rival in a wrong tone to her after all. "I wish you had never met that young Sergeant Troy, Miss," he sighed.

Bathsheba's steps became faintly spasmodic. "Why?" she asked.

"He is not good enough for you."

"Did any one tell you to speak to me like this?"

"Nobody at all."

"Then it appears to me that Sergeant Troy does not concern us here," she said, intractably. "Yet I must say that Sergeant Troy is an educated man, and quite worthy of any woman. He is well born."

"His being higher in learning and birth than the ruck of soldiers is any-

thing but a proof of his worth. It shows his course to be downward."

"I cannot see what this has to do with our conversation. Mr. Troy's course is not by any means downward; and his superiority *is* a proof of his worth."

"I believe him to have no conscience at all. And I cannot help begging you, Miss, to have nothing to do with him. Listen to me this once — only this once! I don't say he's such a bad man as I have fancied — I pray to God he is not. But since we don't exactly know what he is, why not behave as if he *might* be bad, simply for your own safety? Don't trust him, mistress; I ask you not to trust him so."

"Why, pray?"

"I like soldiers, but this one I do not like," he said sturdily. "The nature of his calling may have tempted him astray, and what is mirth to the neighbours is ruin to the woman. When he tries to talk to you again, why not turn away with a short 'Good day;' and when you see him coming one way, turn the other. When he says any thing laughable, fail to see the point and don't smile, and speak of him before those who will report your talk as 'that fantastical man,' or 'that Sergeant What's-his-name,' 'That man of a family that has come to the dogs.' Don't be unmannerly towards him, but harmless-uncivil, and so get rid of the man."

No Christmas robin detained by a window-pane ever pulsed as did Bathsheba now.

"I say — I say again — that it doesn't become you to talk about him. Why he should be mentioned passes me quite!" she exclaimed desperately. "I know this, th-th-that he is a thoroughly conscientious man — blunt sometimes even to rudeness — but always speaking his mind about you plain to your face!"

"Oh."

"He is as good as anybody in this parish! He is very particular too about going to church — yes, he is!"

"I am afraid nobody ever saw him there. I never did certainly."

"The reason of that is," she said eagerly, "that he goes in privately by the old tower door, just when the service commences, and sits at the back of the gallery. He told me so."

This supreme instance of Troy's goodness fell upon Gabriel's ears like the thirteenth stroke of a crazy clock. It was not only received with utter incredulity as regarded itself, but threw a

doubt on all the assurances that had preceded it.

Oak was grieved to find how entirely she trusted him. He brimmed with deep feeling as he replied in a steady voice, the steadiness of which was spoilt by the palpableness of his great effort to keep it so: —

"You know, mistress, that I love you, and shall love you always. I only mention this to bring to your mind that at any rate I would wish to do you no harm: beyond that I put it aside. I have lost in the race for money and good things, and I am not such a fool as to pretend to you now I am poor, and you have got altogether above me. But, Bathsheba, dear mistress, this I beg you to consider — that both to keep yourself well honoured among the workfolk, and in common generosity to an honourable man who loves you as well as I, you should be more discreet in your bearing towards this soldier."

"Don't, don't, don't!" she exclaimed, in a choking voice.

"Are you not more to me than my own affairs, and even life?" he went on. "Come, listen to me! I am six years older than you, and Mr. Boldwood is ten years older than I, and consider — I do beg you to consider before it is too late — how safe you would be in his hands!"

Oak's allusion to his own love for her lessened, to some extent, her anger at his interference; but she could not really forgive him for letting his wish to marry her be eclipsed by his wish to do her good, any more than his slighting treatment of Troy.

"I wish you to go elsewhere," she said, a paleness of face invisible to the eye being suggested by the trembling words. "Do not remain on this farm any longer. I don't want you — I beg you to go!"

"That's nonsense," said Oak, calmly. "This is the second time you have pretended to dismiss me, and what's the use of it?"

"Pretended! You shall go, sir — your lecturing I will not hear! I am mistress here."

"Go, indeed — what folly will you say next? Treating me like Dick, Tom, and Harry, when you know that a short time ago my position was as good as yours! Upon my life, Bathsheba, it is too barefaced. You know too that I can't go without putting things in such a strait as you wouldn't get out of I can't tell when. Unless, indeed, you'll promise to have an

understanding man as bailiff, or manager, or something. I'll go at once if you'll promise that."

"I shall have no bailiff; I shall continue to be my own manager," she said decisively.

"Very well, then; you should be thankful to me for staying. How would the farm go on with nobody to mind it but a woman? But mind this, I don't wish you to feel you owe me anything. Not I. What I do, I do. Sometimes I say I should be as glad as a bird to leave the place — for don't suppose I'm content to be a nobody. I was made for better things. However, I don't like to see your concerns going to ruin, as they must if you keep in this mind. . . . I hate taking my own measure so plainly, but upon my life your provoking ways make a man say what he wouldn't dream of other times! I own to being rather interfering. But you know well enough how it is, and who she is that I like too well, and feel too much like a fool about to be civil to her."

It is more than probable that she privately and unconsciously respected him a little for this grim fidelity, which had been shown in his tone even more than in his words. At any rate she murmured something to the effect that he might stay if he wished. She said more distinctly, "Will you leave me alone now? I don't order it as a mistress — I ask it as a woman, and I expect you not to be so uncourteous as to refuse."

"Certainly I will, Miss Everdene," said Gabriel, gently. He wondered that the request should have come at this moment, for the strife was over, and they were on a most desolate hill far from any human habitation, and the hour was getting late. He stood still and allowed her to get far ahead of him till he could only see her form upon the sky.

A distressing explanation of this anxiety to be rid of him at that point now ensued. A figure apparently rose from the earth beside her. The shape beyond all doubt was Troy's. Oak would not be even a possible listener, and at once turned back till a good two hundred yards were between the lovers and himself.

Gabriel went home by way of the churchyard. In passing the tower he thought of what she had said about the Sergeant's virtuous habit of entering the church unperceived at the beginning of service. Believing that the little gallery door alluded to was quite disused, he ascended the external flight of steps at the top of which it stood, and examined it.

The pale lustre yet hanging in the north-western heaven was sufficient to show that a sprig of ivy had grown from the wall across the door to a length of more than a foot, delicately tying the panel to the stone jamb. It was a decisive proof that the door had not been opened at least since Troy came back to Weatherbury.

From Fraser's Magazine.

ASSYRIAN DISCOVERIES.

A LECTURE DELIVERED AT THE LONDON INSTITUTION, JANUARY 28, 1874.

THE history of the decipherment of the cuneiform or wedge-shaped inscriptions of Assyria is a story of patience, of acuteness, and of perseverance. When Grotefend, at the beginning of the present century, demonstrated that a certain group of letters on the monuments of Persepolis represented the name of the great Persian monarch Darius, the problem was virtually solved. Burnouf, Lassen, and Rawlinson followed up the path which had thus been opened out for them; and the publication by the last scholar of the long inscription of Behistun, in which Darius Hystaspis narrates the successful history of his troubled reign, enabled the student to become as familiar with the ancient language of Persia as with the Hebrew of the Old Testament. It was found to be one closely related to the Sanskrit of India, though representing a rather later form of speech than the Zend of the sacred books of the Parsees in which the doctrines of Zoroastrianism have been preserved down to our own day. But side by side with these Persian legends we always find two other kinds of cuneiform writing, which do not use the same alphabet as that of the Persian inscriptions, but one infinitely more complex. By the help of the proper names, the reading of these two other texts was determined, and the syllabaries in which they were written were made out. It was then discovered that the one text revealed a Semitic language, nearly allied to Hebrew, while the other text contained an agglutinative idiom resembling those of the Tartar or Finnic tribes. The empire of the old Persian kings included subjects who spoke these three several languages; every edict therefore in order to be generally understood had to be transcribed in each one of them, just as

at the present time a Turkish governor has to publish his decrees in agglutinative Turkish, Semitic Arabic, and Aryan Persian. Now a variety of reasons tended to show that the Semitic language which the decipherment of the inscriptions had brought to light belonged to the inhabitants of Assyria and Babylonia; and by a lucky accident this conclusion was soon afterwards confirmed by the discoveries of Botta and Layard at Nineveh. Bulls and sculptured slabs, obelisks and statues, were brought to Europe covered with lines of writing to the meaning of which the key had now been found; the application of it was only a matter of time and labour.

But the labour was incomparably greater than could have been anticipated. The Assyrians made use, not of an alphabet, but of a syllabary which contained several hundred different characters. Most of these had more than one phonetic value, and they might all be employed as ideographs, that is, not as mere syllabic sounds, but, like the hieroglyphics, as representatives of some particular object or idea. In fact, we now know that they were at the outset nothing but hieroglyphics which were gradually corrupted into the arrow-headed forms met with upon the Assyrian monuments; and the attempt to adapt these hieroglyphics to the requirements of a syllabary has given rise to all the difficulties I have just mentioned. The people who invented them were the primitive inhabitants of Chaldea, the builders of the great cities there, and the originators of civilization in Western Asia. Their language was agglutinative, that is to say, the relations of grammar were expressed, not by inflections, but by the addition of independent words; and it belonged to the same family of speech as Tartar, Mongolian, or Basque. They seem to have called themselves Accadians or people of Accad, a word signifying "highlanders," and showing that they must have originally descended from the mountains of Elam on the east. The Elamites, accordingly, as we find from the inscriptions, spoke cognate dialects to this Accadian; and the Accadians themselves looked back upon the mountains of the East as "the mountain of the world" and the cradle of mankind. Babylonia was never secure from invasions from this quarter until the Elamites were at last nearly extirpated by Assurbanipal or Sardanapalus, the son of Esarhaddon.

More than once in historical times the hardy highlanders overran and conquered their quieter neighbours. In the fourteenth chapter of Genesis we are told that Chedor-loamer, King of Elam, was the leader of a confederacy of subordinate Babylonian princes; and the bricks inform us of a certain Cudur-Mabug, "the father" or "governor of Palestine," who came from Yavutbal or Yatbur in Elam and founded a dynasty in Chaldea. 1635 years, again, before the conquest of Elam by Assurbanipal, Cudurnankhundi, the monarch of that country, had invaded and "oppressed Accad;" and in the sixteenth century B.C. the whole of Babylonia was conquered by an Elamite tribe called Cassi (or Kossæans as the name is given by the classical geographers), under a leader entitled Khammuragas. Khammuragas first occupied Northern Babylonia, then governed by a queen, and for the first time fixed his capital at a city hitherto known as Din-tir or "House of Life," but which henceforth took the name of Bab-ili or Babylon, "the gate of the gods." After establishing his power in this part of the country, Khammuragas succeeded in overcoming Naram-Sin or Rim-Sin, the King of Southern Babylonia, and in founding a dynasty which lasted for several centuries. He seems to have assumed the Semitic name of Samsu-iluna, "The Sun [is] our God," and accordingly built a great temple to his patron deity at Larsa, the modern Senkereh. A large number of canals were constructed during his reign, more especially the famous Nahr Malka or King's Canal of which Pliny speaks, and an embankment was built along the banks of the Tigris. Khammuragas appears to have had his attention turned to the irrigation of the country by an inundation which destroyed the important city of Mullias. Numberless temples also were founded and repaired by the prince, and images covered with gold were set up in them. His successors intermarried with the royal family of Assyria; and upon one occasion, when the reigning sovereign had been murdered and a usurper of low birth placed upon the throne by the rebels, the Assyrian king marched into Babylonia, suppressed the revolt, and restored the crown to the brother of the murdered prince. At other times, however, the intercourse between the two countries was not so amicable, and finally about 1270 B.C. Tiglath-Adar, King of Assyria, took Babylon by storm, put an end to the dynasty of

Khammuragas, and founded a line of Semitic monarchs which lasted down to the days of Sargon and Sennacherib.

Now the materials for this reconstruction of ancient history have been furnished in some measure by contemporaneous records, but principally by the small clay tablets which were found at Kouyundjik by Mr. Layard. Thousands of fragments of these, covered with the most minute writing, are now in Europe, for the most part in the British Museum. The fragments have been patiently pieced together by Messrs. Norris and Cox, by Sir H. Rawlinson, and last, but not least, by Mr. G. Smith; and they turn out to have formed part of an extensive library collected by Assurbanipal. And this brings me back to the explanation of the way in which the difficulties arising from the intricacies of the Assyrian syllabary have been smoothed over. The Assyrians themselves, and still more the foreigners at the Ninevite Court, found these difficulties nearly as great as we do. Syllabaries were accordingly drawn up in which the character to be explained was put in the middle column, the column on the left giving its phonetic power, and that on the right the Assyrian meaning of what that phonetic power signified in the old Accadian language, and of the character itself in Assyrian when used as an ideograph. Thus the character which is sounded *mi* and *sib* is explained to denote "assembly," "mass," and "herd," because these were the significations of *mi* and *sib* in Accadian, and of the character in question whenever it stood alone. In a syllabary which Mr. G. Smith has lately brought home a fourth column is added, containing Assyrian synonymes of the words written in the third column. Besides the syllabaries, there are tablets of synonymes, lists of countries, deities, animals, birds, and stones, and above all, grammars, dictionaries, and phrase-books of Accadian and Assyrian, together with interlinear or parallel translations of Accadian texts into the language of Nineveh. It is these latter that have enabled us to interpret this ancient forgotten tongue, and to decipher the brick-legends of the early Babylonian kings. Assurbanipal is never weary of repeating that Nebo and his wife Tasmit have enlarged his ears and given sight to his eyes, so that he was inspired to "write and engrave on tablets, and explain all the characters of the syllabary that exist, and to place [them] in the midst of" his "palace for the inspection of" his "people." But

it must not be supposed that this was the first library ever formed in those regions. On the contrary, Assurbanipal was but the last of a series of monarchs who were worthy predecessors of the Attali and Ptolemies of a later period. All the great cities of Babylonia had their libraries, most of them older than the sixteenth century B.C., and Babylon itself could boast of no less than two which still lie buried under its ruins waiting for the explorer to open them. Libraries existed in Assyria also, but they consisted for the most part of works imported from Chaldea and translated from the Accadian. The most famous of the Babylonian libraries was that of the city of Agane, the very site of which is now unknown. It was got together by a king called Sargon, who immediately preceded the queen conquered by Khammuragas. To this library belonged the standard work on astrology, consisting of 70 tablets or books as we should call them. It was entitled "the illumination of Bel," and in later times was translated into Greek by the Chaldean historian Berosus, a contemporary of Alexander the Great, whose works are unfortunately now lost. It passed through many editions, and suitable extracts were made from it upon the occurrence of any astronomical phenomena. Eclipses for the most part were recorded in it, and whatever event had been observed to take place after any particular eclipse would happen again, it was supposed, whenever the eclipse occurred on the same day. The following specimens from the 23rd chapter of the work will give some idea of its general character:

In the month Sivan, on the 14th day, an eclipse happens, and in the east it begins, in the west it ends. In the night-watch it begins and in the morning-watch it ends. Eastward, at the time of appearance and disappearance, its shadow is seen; and to the King of Dilmun a crown is given; the King of Dilmun grows old on the throne. On the 15th day an eclipse takes place; the King of Dilmun is murdered on the throne, and a nobody seizes on the government. On the 16th day an eclipse occurs; the king is slain by his eunuchs, and his nephew seizes on the throne. On the 20th day an eclipse happens; there are rains in heaven; floods flow in the channels. On the 21st day an eclipse takes place; there is devastation or rapine in the country; there are dead bodies in the country.

At the beginning of the year, in the month Nisan, on the 14th day, an eclipse occurs; deserts are made in the land of the enemy, and the land is reduced; the king dies. On the 15th day an eclipse occurs; famine en-

sues; men sell their sons for silver. On the 16th day an eclipse occurs; a destructive wind blows across the land, and the planet Mars is in the ascendant, and the cattle are scattered. On the 20th day an eclipse occurs; king against king sends war. On the 21st day an eclipse takes place; again there is oppression.

In the month Elul, from the 10th to the 30th day, there was no eclipse. The crops will fail. If the air-god is obscured, rain and flood will come down. If rain has descended, the king of the land sees misfortune. If the wind sweeps the face of the country, for six years the country sees famine.

Now, all this seems to us very childish. But it must be remembered that the science of astronomy has grown out of such false and superstitious views of nature, and that, in fact, without such observations as are recorded in these old Babylonian tablets, it could never have come into existence at all. Nor must we suppose that these astrological formulæ were the only result of Chaldean stargazing. To say nothing of the formation of a calendar, in itself a work of primary importance, we have a catalogue of the astrological works contained in this very library of Sargon, in which we find one on "the conjunction of the moon and the sun," another on comets, and a third on the pole-star. It is curious to meet with a direction to the student at the end of this catalogue, in which he is told to write down the number of the tablet he wishes to consult, and the librarian will thereupon give it to him. In this matter at least we have not improved upon the old Babylonian system.

But the royal patronage of astronomy was not confined to libraries and their contents. The Astronomer Royal, as we should term him, was a very important person in the monarchies of the Euphrates and the Tigris, and observatories were established in all the great cities, at Nineveh, at Arbela, at that Ur of the Chaldees in which Abraham was born, and at many other places. Monthly reports had to be sent in to the king; and though they are not couched in the precise language of modern science, they yet show that these ancient people honestly devoted themselves to their work, imperfect as their means were, and had come to know that eclipses occurred in a regular order, and could therefore be predicted. Here are two of these reports. The first tells us that the vernal equinox fell upon the 6th of the month Nisan, or March, in the following language:

The 6th day of Nisan, the day and the night

were equal. (There were) twelve hours of day and twelve of night. To the king my lord may the gods Nebo and Merodach be propitious.

The second report is a longer one. The king is informed that a solar eclipse was expected; but though the heavens were carefully watched for three days, it did not take place:

To the king my lord, thy servant Ebed-Istar. Peace to the king my lord. May Nebo and Merodach be propitious to the king my lord. May the great gods grant the king my lord long days, soundness of flesh, and joy of heart. On the 27th of the month the moon disappeared. On the 28th, 29th, and 30th of the month we watched for the eclipse of the sun, but the sun did not become eclipsed. On the 1st of the month Tammuz the moon was seen in the daytime above the planet Mercury, of which I have already sent a special account to the king my lord. During the first five days of the month, when the moon is termed Anu, it was seen declining in the circle of the star called the Shepherd of the Heavenly Flock; but the horns were not visible on account of rain. Thus I have sent a report of its conjunction, during these first five days of the month to the king. Thus it extended itself, and was visible under the star of the Chariot. During the period from the 10th to the 15th day it disappeared. It circled round the star of the Chariot, [so that] a conjunction with it was prevented, although its conjunction with Mercury during the first five days of the month, of which I have already sent an account to the king my lord, was not prevented. May the king my lord have peace.

Two things strike us in these reports, I mean the servility and the extremely religious colouring which they display. The servility is the natural product of an Oriental despotism; but the obtrusive piety is the result of a combination of Semitic religious zeal with an elaborate system of theology which the Assyrians had learnt from their Accadian predecessors. The old population of Babylonia was inordinately superstitious; it had invented innumerable epithets for the gods it worshipped, and then had turned these into fresh deities. The whole world was filled with spirits, some beneficent, some harmful; even the cup of water that was drunk, or the food that was eaten, had to be exorcised lest the demon which possessed it might enter the body, and produce disease and death. The priests were acquainted with all the details of the future state; those whom the gods favoured would enjoy everlasting life in their presence in "the land of the silver sky," feasting at richly garnished

altars, and wandering amid the light of "the fields of the blessed;" while for the rest of mankind was reserved the lower world of Hades, "the land whence none may return," as it was called. Here Allat, "the queen of the mighty country," ruled together with Tu, the god of death; and Datilla, the river of the dead, flowed sluggishly along, nourishing the monstrous seven-headed serpent which lashes the sea into waves. Seven gates and seven warder-spirits shut it in; and in its midst rose the golden throne of the gods of the earth, the Anunnaci, or offspring of Anu, the sky. It was a land of darkness, and those who were within longed in vain for the light. Before reaching this dreary region the souls of the departed were stripped bare and empty; and though the waters of life bubbled up in its inmost depths, they were never allowed to taste them. The spirits of earth who inhabited it were six hundred in number, and they seem to have been regarded generally as hostile to mankind. Numerous as they were, they each had a name, like the three hundred spirits of heaven. Above both came the fifty great gods, and above these latter again the seven magnificent deities, at the head of whom stood the trinity of Bel, Anu, and Hea. Anu and his brothers were the children of Zikara, "the sky," for Zikara was the universal mother of all the divinities whom the Assyrians feared.

With such a pantheon the whole life of the Babylonian must have been passed in appeasing the deities he believed in, or in seeking their favour and help. He was wholly surrounded by a spiritual world. There were spirits of the head, spirits of the neck, spirits of the hand, and spirits of the stomach. Their names and titles were legion, and numberless hymns were composed in their honour. But even this vast army of divine beings did not suffice; new deities were formed out of personified cities and countries; and in Assyria the god Assur, the personification of the old capital of the country, came to be the supreme object of worship. The astronomer-priests, moreover, identified different deities with the various planets and stars; and so a star-worship came to be added to the already overgrown pantheon. It must not be supposed that these divine beings were distinct deities. The larger part of them had grown out of the manifold epithets applied to the gods. The epithets had been personified, and so transformed into new gods. Hence gods of different name

had the same characteristics, and we often find the same deity appearing under several forms. All this, of course, gave rise to innumerable mythological tales. Thus Allat, the goddess of Hades, was originally only another form of Istar, or Astarte, the Assyrian Venus; and yet there is a legend which, forgetting this fact, tells how Istar descended into Hades to seek her dead husband Du-zi, "the son of life," and was there confined by Allat, her double, until the gods of heaven sent messengers to release her and restore her to the upper world. Du-zi himself is another instance of this mythological tendency to evolve many new forms and persons out of one original. He is the same as Tammuz or Adonis, for whom the women that Ezekiel saw at the northern gate of the Temple were weeping, and who was slain by a boar while hunting. But Tammuz is also Tam-zi, "the sun of life," a second husband of Istar, and the hero of that Chaldean Flood-story which Mr. Smith discovered a year ago. When we come to examine more closely into the matter, we find that both Du-zi and Tam-zi are at bottom, like Adonis, only epithets given to the Sun; and when it is said that Du-zi was killed, and had to pass to the lower world, or that Tam-zi floated in his ship above the flood of water during the rainy season of the year, this only means that the summer sun is slain by the winter, and that the ark of the great luminary of day sails through the sky above the clouds to reappear when the rain and the tempest have ceased. Indeed, the name of Tam-zi simply signifies the morning sun, which gives light and life to the world; and he is called the son of Ubara-Tutu, that is, "the glow of sunset." Tutu, the second part of the name of this father of Tam-zi, is the same as Tu, the god of Hades, and really means nothing else except the "setting sun," which was supposed to rule in the world below during the dark hours of night. In this invisible chaos was placed the origin of all things; and so Tutu is termed the "progenitor," the father of gods and men, "he who prophesies before the king."

Now there is something very remarkable connected with these stories of Istar and Tam-zi. They form part of a series of twelve tablets, or books, which are artificially connected together by being interwoven into the history of a certain mythical hero, Gisdhubar, another form of the sun, just as the common thread that runs through the different poems of

the *Iliad* is the adventures of the Greeks before Troy. Such stories as those I have just alluded to are introduced as episodes told to Gisdhubar. Now it is very curious that at least as early as the sixteenth century B.C. the Accadians should have possessed a long epic, composed of older independent legends artificially pieced together; and it is still more curious that the principle upon which the stories have been arranged should have been an astronomical one. Each story is assigned to the month and the sign of the zodiac—for the Accadian months were named after the zodiacal signs—which best corresponded to the character of it; thus the legend of Istar comes sixth, answering to the sixth month, called “the errand of Istar,” and to Virgo, the sixth sign of the zodiac; and the legend of Tam-zi and the Deluge occurs on the eleventh tablet, just as the eleventh month was termed “the rainy,” and as Aquarius is the eleventh zodiacal sign. It shows how devoted the old Babylonians must have been to the study of astronomy, that the science should have dominated even over the formation of the national epic.

I cannot leave this subject of the religion and superstitions of the Assyrians and Chaldeans without referring to their elaborate system of augury. There were tables of omens from dreams, omens from the births of men and animals, omens from birds, omens from the weather; and in fact every occurrence that could possibly take place was supposed to be of either good or evil presage. Thus “to dream of bright light foreboded a fire in the city,” and “the sight of a decaying house” was a sign of misfortune to its inhabitant. So we have a long list of birth-ports in which every conceivable accident is duly recorded. It begins in this way: “When a woman has a child, which has a lion’s ears, it brings a strong king into the country. If it wants the right ear, the days of the master [of the house] are prolonged. If it wants both ears, it brings evil into the country, and the country is reduced. If the right ear is small, the man’s house will tumble down. If both the ears are small, the man’s house will be made of bricks;” and so on through all the other members of the body. Perhaps it will be interesting to know that if a child has a nose like a bird’s beak, the country will be at peace; while if the nose is wanting, evil will possess the land, and the master of the house will die.

There is one occurrence, however, which is never likely to happen, desirable as its consequences are. “When a sheep bears a lion,” we are told, “the arms of the king will be powerful, and the king will have no rival.”

But manifold as were the evils which untoward events were continually bringing about, the Babylonians knew how to prevent them by cunning charms and exorcisms. There is a tablet of these in the British Museum in Accadian with an Assyrian translation annexed. Here we read magic formulæ like the following:

May the evil god, the evil spirit of the neck, the spirit of the desert, the spirit of the land, the spirit of the sea, the spirit of the river, the evil cherub of the city, [and] the noxious wind be driven forth from the man himself, [and] the clothing of the body; from the evil spirit of the neck may the king of heaven preserve, may the king of earth preserve.

From sickness of the entrails, from sickness of the heart, from the palpitation of a sick heart, from sickness of bile, from sickness of the head, from noxious colic, from the agitation of terror, from flatulency of the bowels, from noxious illness, from lingering sickness, from nightmare, may the king of heaven preserve, may the king of earth preserve.

From the sweeper-away of buildings, from the robber, from the evil face, from the evil eye, from the evil mouth, from the evil tongue, from the evil lip, from the evil nose, may the king of heaven preserve, may the king of earth preserve.

These magic formulæ, it would seem, had to be tied about the limbs of the sufferer, like the phylacteries of the Jews. Thus we are told: “Let a woman hold the charm with the right hand, but leave the left hand alone. Knot it twice with seven knots, and bind it round the sick man’s head, yea bind it round the sick man’s brows and round his hands and feet like fetters; and let her sit upon his bed and cast holy water over him;” and again: “In the night-time fix a sentence out of a good tablet [or book] on the sick man’s head [as he lies] in bed.” These sentences were the same as the Hebrew proverbs, though some of them may have been extracts from the numerous hymns with which Babylonian literature abounded. A large part of these hymns were translated from Accadian into Assyrian; and we have a record that Assurbanipal’s library possessed nine poems on the west side, the first of these being addressed to Assur, and fifteen on the east side. Some idea may be formed of the character of these hymns from the two follow-

ing specimens, one of which is dedicated to the Sun-god, and the other has been aptly called by Mr. Fox Talbot the "Song of the Seven Spirits :"

O Sun-god, in the expanse of heaven thou shinest,
And the bright locks of heaven thou openest :
The gate of heaven thou openest.

Seven they [are], seven they [are],
In the splendour of heaven seven they [are].
Male they [are] not, female they [are] not.
Rule [and] kindness know they not :

O Sun-god, to the world thy face thou directest.
O Sun-god, with the brightness of heaven the earth thou coverest.

In the stream of Ocean seven they [are],
In the stream of Ocean in a palace grew they up.

Wife they have not, child they bear not.
Prayer [and] supplication hear they not.

Seven they [are], seven they [are], seven twice again they [are].

These seven spirits, it may be remarked, were the guardians of the planets and of the week, and stood, we are told, in the presence of the Moon. They were born in those abysmal waters on which the earth was founded, and out of whose encircling tide, as from the Okeanos of Homer, rose the great luminaries of heaven.

The devotion of the Chaldeans to the affairs of the spiritual world did not, however, prevent them from framing laws. We possess a curious table of Accadian laws, with an Assyrian translation at the side. One of these laws enjoins that, "If a wife repudiate her husband, and say, 'Thou art not my husband,' into the river they shall throw her," in striking contrast with the milder penalty incurred by the man for the same offence: "If a husband say to his wife, 'Thou art not my wife,' half a maneh of silver shall he pay." Indeed it is clear that the father possessed almost absolute authority in his family, as among the Romans; thus another law lays down that "If a son say to his father, 'Thou art not my father,' he shall cast him off, send him away, and sell him for silver." So, too, we find the astrological tablets speaking of children being sold by their parents. The interests of the slave, however, were not wholly neglected. "If a master," it is laid down, "hurt, kill, injure, beat, maim, or reduce to sickness his slave, his hand which so offended shall pay half a maneh of corn." The punishment was certainly not very severe; but we must not judge the people of that early time by the standard of our own day, and it was something for the slave to be protected, however slightly, by the State.

Only a few of the laws relating to property have as yet been discovered. These, however, must have existed, since trade transactions were carried on actively. We may see numerous black stones in the Museum, which record the sale and

purchase of particular lands, and the most terrible curses are invoked upon the heads of those who should injure and destroy these evidences of the ownership of property. One of them, lately found by Mr. Smith, tells us that the ground mentioned in it was bestowed by the king upon a sort of poet-laureate on account of some panegyrics he had written upon the kingdom. Still more plentiful than these are private contract-tablets, often inclosed in an outer coating of clay, on which an abstract of the contents of the inner tablet is stamped. Many of them are pierced with holes, through which strings were passed attached to leaves of papyri. The latter have long since perished; but papyrus was used by the Accadians as a writing material at a remote date, although the more durable clay tablets were preferred. The mercantile class seems to have consisted chiefly of Semites rather than of Accadians; and if we want to find the fullest development of business and commerce we must come down to the eighth and seventh centuries B.C., when Nineveh was a bustling centre of trade. Tyre had been destroyed by the Assyrian kings, and trade had accordingly transferred itself farther to the East. Carchemish, which was favourably situated near the Euphrates, was the meeting-place of the merchants of all nations, and the "maneh of Carchemish" became the standard of weight. Houses and other property, including slaves, were bought and sold; and the carefulness with which the deeds of sale or lease were drawn up, the details into which they went, and the number of attesting witnesses, were quite worthy of a modern lawyer. Money, too, was lent at interest, usually at the rate of four per cent., but sometimes, more especially when goods like iron were borrowed, at three per cent. Security for the loan was often taken in houses or other property. The witnesses and con-

tracting parties generally affixed their seals; but where they were too poor to possess any, a nail-mark was considered sufficient. All this appreciation and interchanging of property led, as we might suppose, to testamentary devolution; and no less a document than the private will of Sennacherib is now in the British Museum. As this is the earliest specimen of a will known, the contents of it may be of some interest. The king says: "I Sennacherib, king of multitudes, King of Assyria, have given chains of gold, heaps of ivory, a cup of gold, crowns and chains with them, all the wealth that [I have] in heaps, crystal, and another precious stone, and bird's stone; one and a half maneh, two and a half *cibi* in weight; to Esar-haddon my son, who was afterwards named Assur-ebil-mucinpal according to my wish. The treasure [is deposited] in the temple of Amuk and [Nebo-] irik-erba, the harpists of Nebo." The monarch, it would seem, did not need any witnesses to attest the deed; the royal signature was considered sufficient.

It may appear strange to us to find records of this kind stamped upon clay tablets. But it must be remembered that papyrus and parchment were scarce and dear, although papyrus at any rate was in use, while clay was abundant; and it is fortunate for us that Assyrian literature was entrusted to so durable a material. Even epistolary correspondence was carried on by means of baked clay; and the library of Kouyundjik possessed a collection of royal letters inscribed upon clay tablets, besides despatches from the generals in the field to the Government at home. In fact, the whole literature of the nation was contained in these "*l'ateres coctiles*" ("*baked bricks*") as Pliny calls them; and one of the latest discoveries of Mr. Smith is a volume of fables which belonged to a certain Assyrian city. Fragments only of two or three of these have as yet been met with; one of them is a dialogue between the ox and the horse, another between the eagle and the sun. Such a discovery is interesting, because it shows that Egypt or Africa was not the only birthplace of the beast-fable, as has been commonly imagined; but that human ingenuity has hit upon the same means of conveying a lesson in various parts of the world. Among the most valuable portions of this literature in clay are the chronological tablets. These have already enabled us to restore the chronology of Western Asia from the ninth to the seventh cen-

turies B.C., and to correct the corresponding dates in the Old Testament, hitherto the despair of historians; while Mr. Smith has lately found a few remnants of what is probably a synopsis of Babylonian history from the mythical period downwards, in which the length of the reigns is given and the duration of the dynasties summed up.

Such, then, are some of the fruits that have already been gathered in from this abundant harvest. We have suddenly found ourselves brought face to face with the men whose names have been familiar to us from childhood, with Sennacherib, with Nebuchadnezzar, with Tiglath-Pileser. We have Sennacherib's own account of his campaign against Judah, when he shut up Hezekiah in Jerusalem "as a bird in a cage;" we see the Israelites bearing the tribute from Jehu sculptured on Shalmaneser's obelisk; nay, we may examine the archives of that Ur of the Chaldees from which Abraham, we are told, went forth. But more than this. We are made acquainted with the daily life and thought of the people; and the contemporaries of Isaiah and Jeremiah are no longer the unreal phantoms of a fairy-land. We learn that many of our modern discoveries are but re-discoveries after all; and that years ago the inhabitants of the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates had attained a development of civilization and culture of which we have never dreamed. And the beginnings of this civilization are pushed back to so remote an epoch as to be lost amid the mists of a fabulous antiquity. But one thing we now know, and that is that when the Semites—the ancestors of the Hebrews, of the Phœnicians, of the Syrians, and of the Assyrians themselves—first moved from their original home in Arabia across the Euphrates, they found a teeming and highly-civilized population, with great cities and lofty temples and a developed literature. It was there that the Semite learned the elements of culture and knowledge; it was there that he prepared himself for that great work for which he was destined. In the land of Shinar, on the north-western side of Chaldea, the Semitic tribes settled themselves around the mighty cities of Babylon and Erech and Accad and Calneh; and while some remained in the country and finally reduced the old Accadian inhabitants to a state of vassalage, others made their way northward to Haran and Mesopotamia, and eastward to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

But the record is still fragmentary. We have to piece together thousands of shreds of broken clay and to trust to the scattered and half-collected relics of a single Assyrian library. Just enough has been revealed to us to show what incalculable treasures still lie buried under the sands and marshes of the far East. The libraries of Babylonia, numerous and rich as they are, still remain unexplored—at all events by Europeans, for Mr. Smith has found that one of those at Babylon has been broken into by the Arabs, and its contents will soon be lost. A corner only of Assyria, so to speak, has as yet been examined; and the results of Mr. Smith's brief and hurried diggings last year in the palace of Assurbanipal prove how much is to be discovered even there. And beyond Chaldea lie the ruined cities of a civilization older even than that of the Accadians; the relics of the once mighty kingdom of Elam. The monuments that line the shores of the Persian Gulf or are hidden among the highlands of Susiana are still untouched. Here indeed there is a vast field for work; and it may be hoped that the example set by the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph* will find many imitators, and that some small portion at least of the wealth of which we boast may be devoted to the revelation of that past without which we can neither understand the present nor provide for the future.

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From All The Year Round.
WHITBY JET.

JET, a sort of semi-jewellery in its usual applications, is one of those many substances which have a kind of mysterious brotherhood with coal. The beautiful pearly white paraffin for candles comes from coal; so does the benzoline which we use in our handy little sponge lamps; so do the gorgeous magenta and aniline dyes and pigments; and so, some people think, does jet. In this last-named instance, if coal is to be mentioned at all, we should rather say that jet is a kind of coal, not that it is produced from coal. Be this as it may, jet, a shining black substance, is found in seams dissociated from all other black minerals: not in the coal regions, but in other districts of England, notably near Whitby in Yorkshire. It occurs also in Spain,

in Saxony, and in the amber districts on the Prussian shores of the Baltic.

Scientific men, in the language of mineralogy, say that jet is a variety of coal; that it occurs sometimes in elongated masses, sometimes in the form of branches, with a woody structure; that its fracture is conchoidal or shelly, its lustre brilliant and resinous, and its colour velvet black; that it is about twenty per cent. heavier than water; that it burns with a greenish flame, emits a bituminous odour while burning, and leaves a yellowish ash. But the Whitby folks can adduce many reasons for thinking that jet, in some of its forms at any rate, must have been at one time in a semi-liquid state, quite unlike coal derived from a ligneous origin. Mr. Simpson, curator of the Whitby Museum, states that that collection comprises among its specimens a large mass of bone which has had the exterior converted into or replaced by jet. This jet coating is about a quarter of an inch thick. The jetty matter appears to have entered into the pores of the bone, and there to have hardened; during this hardening or mineralizing process the bony matter has been gradually displaced and supplanted by jet, the original form of the bone being maintained. Another reason for thinking that the jet or some of it, must once have been in a gummy or semi-liquid state, is that bits of vegetable and mineral substances are sometimes found imbedded in it, as flies, wings, and small fragments are in amber. Cavities and fissures in the adjacent rocky strata are also sometimes found filled with it, as if it had flowed into them originally. The stratum called "jet-rock," in which the Whitby jet is mostly found, is a kind of shale, which, when distilled, yields ten gallons of oil per ton. That in a remote geological era there was an intimate relation between this oil and the jet is very probable; though its exact nature cannot now be determined. The Yorkshire coast for many miles north and south of Whitby is a storehouse of jet. The deposit occurs in the lias formation, the jet-rock being interlaid with other lias strata. Two kinds are found in different beds or layers, the hard and the soft jet. The hard, which is in all respects the best, occurs in detached compact layers or pieces, from small bits no bigger than dominoes to pieces of many pounds weight. The largest piece recorded measured six feet long, five to six inches

wide, and an inch and a half thick; it weighed nearly twelve pounds. The British Museum authorities refused to give ten guineas for this fine specimen; whereupon it was sold for fifteen guineas to a dealer, who had it carved into crosses of exceptionally large size.

For how long a period jet, or black amber as it was at one time called, has been found and worked near Whitby, no one can now say; but the time certainly ranges over many centuries. In a tumulus or barrow, opened in the vicinity of the town, was found the skeleton of a lady—supposed to have been ancient British, before the date of the arrival of the Danes—and with it was a jet earring, two inches long by a quarter of an inch in thickness, shaped like a heart, and pierced with a hole at the upper end for the reception of a ring or wire. An ancient document affords presumptive proof that jet was known and used for purposes of ornament before the founding of Whitby Abbey. Caedmon, a Saxon poet, buried in this abbey, wrote some lines which have been modernized thus—

Jet, almost a gemm, the Lybians find;
But fruitful Britain sends as wondrous kind;
'Tis black and shining, smooth and ever light,
'Twill draw up straws if rubbed till hot and bright!

This last allusion is to the electrical qualities of jet, which are very considerable, and somewhat like those of amber—whence its occasional name of black amber. The substance was, in the middle ages, made at Whitby into beads and rosaries, probably by the monks or friars.

As a branch of regular trade, Whitby jet work was of not much account till about the beginning of the present century. The Spaniards made the principal beads and rosaries for Roman Catholic countries of a soft kind of jet; but when English ladies began to wear jet as mourning jewellery, the superior hardness of the Whitby material induced some of the townsmen to attend to this kind of work. The first workers employed nothing but knives and files in fashioning the ornaments; but one Matthew Hill gave an extension to the trade by finding the means of turning the jet in a lathe—a more difficult matter than turning wood, owing to the brittleness of the material. In a short time there were ten or twelve shops in Whitby where jet beads, necklaces, crosses, pendants, and snuff-boxes were made

and sold. About thirty years ago, Mr. Bryan, the chief representative of the trade, obtained the largest "find" of jet ever known, from a spot in the neighbourhood called the North Bats; it comprised three hundred and seventy pieces, or "stones," valued at two hundred and fifty pounds. There were fifty workshops engaged in the trade at the time of the first Great Exhibition in 1851; the number now exceeds two hundred.

According to an interesting account of this industry by Mr. Bower, the jet is obtained by two modes of operation, cliff-work and hill-work. Pieces of jet washed out by the sea from fissures in the face of the cliff are, indeed, sometimes picked up on the beach; but these are few in number, unreliable for purposes of regular trade. In cliff-work, portions of the face of the cliff are hewn down, until seams of jet are made visible; and the jet is picked out from these seams, so long as it can be got at. This is somewhat dangerous employment, owing to the precipitous nature of the cliffs. In hill-work, diggings are made in the Cleveland hills, near Bilsdale, about twenty miles inland from Whitby. Tunnels are driven into the hillsides, drift-ways and lateral passages are driven, and jet-rock is thus laid bare in various spots; picks and other instruments extract the pieces of jet, which small waggon running upon a tramway bring to the tunnel's mouth. The find is always precarious, especially in cliff work; sometimes no jet is obtained in a month's work; while, in other instances a lucky hit will bring to light a valuable harvest. At present the hill-work is most adopted, and there are about twenty small mines at the Cleveland hills. The men rent the workings, as at the Cornish copper and tin mines; their profits represent their wages, and depend on the ratio between the richness of the seam and the rent paid; inasmuch that the miners have every motive for exercising judgment and discrimination in the bargains they may make. The best hard jet will realize, when in large pieces, thirty shillings per pound; whereas the poorest soft pieces are barely worth a shilling a pound: these extremes are separated by many intermediate gradations of value. The Whitby hard is the finest jet known, having more toughness and elasticity than any other, admitting of more delicate working, and taking a higher polish. On the other hand the Spanish soft is better than the Whitby soft; and experts

say that many ornaments sold in the shops as genuine Whitby, came from beyond the Pyrenees, and were never made of Whitby jet at all. They look well at first, but are apt to break up under the influence of sudden heat and cold, and are in other respects far from durable. This fragility is believed to be due to a small percentage of sulphur which most Spanish jet contains.

Let us suppose that pieces of jet, varying much in size and shape, are brought to the workshop. The rough jet has a kind of exterior skin or crust, often marked by impressions of ammonites and other fossils, and presenting various tints of bluish brown. This skin is removed by means of a large chisel. At the sawing-bench the piece is then cut up with saws. This process requires much discrimination, seeing that the size and shape of the piece must determine the kind, size, and number of ornaments obtained from it; the great object is to waste as little of the substance as possible. From the saw-bench, the jet passes into the hands of the carvers and turners. The turning is effected by a careful use of small lathes. The carving is effected by grinding rather than cutting, grindstones of various kinds being used, and the jet applied to them in succession—first to grind away, and then to polish. In this way most of the beads, necklaces, bracelets, crosses, brooches, lockets, chain-links, &c., are made, as well as bas-reliefs, floral designs, and monograms. A clever workman will get twenty per cent. more value out of the same piece of jet than a man of less skill and judgment, by adapting his design to the size and shape of the piece. Soft jet is much wasted during working, by the presence of fibres, grit, &c.; it is therefore better fitted for beads than for intricate ornaments. Much use is made of the cutting mill, a disc or wheel of soft metal, about eight inches in diameter; the edge, or rim, made sharp and set in rapid revolution, cuts the jet quickly and smoothly. The surfaces of the carved or turned ornaments are polished by being held against the edge of a revolving wheel, covered with walrus or bull-neck leather, and wetted with copperas and oil. The edges, scrolls, curls, and twists, require that the wheel edge shall be covered with list; and then comes a final application to a brush-wheel. The beads for necklaces, bracelets, &c., are put together with strong twisted threads and small wires. Chains are made by turning

and carving the links separately, splitting some of them, and inserting the unsplit into the split links; small wires are inserted where necessary, and the split closed up with a cement of shellac and resin. Pendants, ear-drops, &c., are linked in a similar way. Some of the jet, when rough-cut at Whitby, is bought by Birmingham jewellers, who finish it according to their own taste.

Whitby suspects that Scarborough affects to look down upon it as a poor imitation of a fashionable watering-place. At any rate, a newspaper in the latter town poked fun at the jet trade of Whitby not very long ago: "All towns have their peculiar industries, and jet is well known to be the industry of Whitby. Jet meets you at every turn and in every shape; even the large black Newfoundland dogs, glossy from their bath, sit as if carved out of jet. Surely no modern manufacture of trumpery ever rivalled this in ugliness. With a refinement of cruelty, some insert sections of ammonites in it; others (this is the ne plus ultra of richness) surround it with a fret-work of alabaster; and you may buy a card-tray of this glittering, inconclusive material, with the classic features of Victor Emmanuel staring at you from the bottom. One wonders who can buy such things; but there are some people who must have the speciality of the place they are in, however base and trivial it may be. Those who acquire mosaics at Rome, beads at Venice, inlaid wood at Sorrento, carved paper-knives in Switzerland, iron brooches at Berlin, marble paper-weights in Derbyshire, and all the 'fun of the fair' wherever they go, will surely not fail to carry away some dark memorials of Whitby."

This may be all very well as a passing skit, but is not worth much as an argument. Whether jet is a suitable material for small ornaments is surely a matter of taste, as it is in regard to coral, black pearls, and bog oak. The jet trade is increasing, and now gives employment to fifteen hundred hands in Whitby and its neighbourhood. The influence of fashion is shown in a remarkable way when the death of any great personage at court is announced, such as that of the Duke of Wellington, or of the Prince Consort: at such a time Whitby can hardly meet the sudden demand for jet jewellery suitable for mourning. Once now and then, however, the joy of the nation is the sorrow of jet dealers. When the Prince of Wales lay prostrate with illness, dealers

purchased somewhat largely, in order to be prepared for eventualities. When the Prince recovered there was a larger stock of jet jewellery ready than the public wanted, and so the commodity did not "look up" in the market.

Whitby and Birmingham are trying to improve the designs for jet carvings and turnings; and there is no doubt room for improvement. When a new start was given to the trade at the first great Exhibition, the Art Journal engraved some new designs suitable to this peculiar material. The beneficial result was seen at the next Exhibition eleven years afterwards; and still more decidedly at the second of the two annual International Exhibitions, when jet ornaments took their place in the jewellery display of that year. Two or three years ago the Turners' Company of London having offered prizes for meritorious specimens of turning in wood, ivory, and other material, the judges were agreeably surprised at having placed before them a vase turned in jet. The Whitby maker had skilfully cemented two or more pieces together, to obtain a sufficient bulk of the substance for the purpose; and his honorary reward was, the freedom of the City of London. Jet is usually found in such thin seams that nearly all the ornaments and articles made of it are flat and of small thickness; cementing is occasionally adopted, where two pieces are suitable for being joined face to face; but all attempts to work up fragments, cuttings, turnings, and powder into a paste or homogeneous mass, have hitherto failed. This can be done with amber, and with the meerschäum clay for pipe-bowls; but no mode has yet been devised for adopting the same course with jet.

As in most other trades, a love of cheapness acts frequently as a bar to the attainment of any high degree of technical skill. A shopkeeper will show his lady customer two jet brooches or necklaces almost exactly alike in appearance; she is prone to select the cheaper of the two, regardless of the fact that the other presents higher claims as a specimen of art workmanship. If called by its right name, an excellent material of recent introduction would deserve much commendation; but when announced as imitation jet, and still more when allowed to pass for jet itself, it deserves the censure that is due to all shams. We speak of ebonite or vulcanite, a very tough material, prepared with india rubber and other

substances, smooth and black, but not taking so high a polish as jet. Black glass does duty for a large quantity of cheap mourning jewellery, innocently supposed by many of the wearers to be jet. Another substitute is wood-powder, blacked, moulded, and hardened. A still more remarkable material is paper pulp, cast or pressed into blocks, rolled into sheets, cut up, ground on wheels, blacked, and polished. But, naturally enough, these substitutes for the genuine article find no favour in Whitby.

From The Academy.

A LETTER OF LAURENCE STERNE.

IN the short autobiography which Sterne left behind him, he says that at the time of his marriage his uncle Jaques and himself were upon very good terms, "for he soon got me the prebendary of York, but he quarrelled with me afterwards, because I would not write paragraphs in the newspapers; though he was a party man, I was not, and detested such dirty work, thinking it beneath me. From that period he became my bitterest enemy." The events of Sterne's life previous to his emerging to fame in 1759 with his first two volumes of *Tristram Shandy*, are little known, and the researches of Mr. Percy Fitzgerald for the biography of Sterne which he published about ten years ago, threw but little light upon the circumstances which helped to form the character of such an eccentric writer. It is, therefore, important to record that among the autograph letters recently purchased by the Trustees of the British Museum are two, written by Laurence Sterne and his uncle respectively in 1750, which have considerable literary and biographical value. We believe that this letter is the only Sterne autograph in the possession of the Museum, with the exception of the original manuscript of *The Sentimental Journey*, and it has been therefore most appropriately placed in one of the public rooms for inspection. Thanks to the courtesy of the keepers of the MS. Department, we have been allowed to make a complete transcript of it, which we print here at length. The Rev. Francis Blackburne, to whom it is addressed, will perhaps be remembered as the author of the *Confessional*, which raised a considerable ferment in its day.

SUTTON: NOV. 3, 1750.

Dear Sir,—

Being last Thursday at York to preach the Dean's turn, Hilyard the Bookseller who had spoke to me last week about Preaching yrs, in case you should not come myself told me, He had just got a Letter from you directing him to get it supplied — But with an intimation, that if I undertook it, that it might not disoblige your Friend the Precentor. If my Doing it for you in any way could possibly have endangered that, my Regard to you on all accounts is such, that you may depend upon it, no consideration whatever would have made me offer my service, nor would I upon any Invitation have accepted it, Had you incautiously press'd it upon me; And therefore that my undertaking it at all, upon Hilyards telling me he should want a Preacher, was from a knowledge, that as it could not in Reason, so it would not in Fact, give the least Handle to what you apprehended. I would not say this from bare conjecture, but known Instances, having preached for so many of Dr. Sternes most Intimate Friends since our Quarrel without their feeling the least marks or most Distant Intimation, that he took it unkindly. In which you will the reader believe me, from the following convincing Proof, that I have preached the 29th of May, the Precentor's own turn, for these two last years together (not at his Request, for we are not upon such terms) But at the Request of Mr. Berdmore whom he desired to get them taken care of, which he did, By applying Directly to me without the least Apprehension or scruple — And If my preaching it the first year had been taken amiss, I am morally certain that Mr. Berdmore who is of a gentle and pacific Temper would not have ventured to have ask'd me to preach it for him the 2d time, which I did without any Reserve this last summer. The Contest between us, no Doubt, has been sharp, But has not been made more so, by bringing our mutual Friends into it, who, in all things, (except Inviting us to the same Dinner) have generally bore themselves towards us as if this misfortune had never happened, and this, as on my side, so I am willing to suppose on his, without any alteration of our opinions of them, unless to their Honor and Advantage. I thought it my Duty to let you know, How this matter stood, to free you of any unnecessary Pain, which my preaching for you might occasion upon this score, since upon all others, I flatter myself you would be pleased, as in genl. it is not only more for the credit of the church, But of the Prebendy himself who is absent, to have his Place supplied by a Preby of the church when he can be had, rather than by Another, tho' of equal merit.

I told you above, that I had had a conference with Hilyard upon this subject, and indeed should have said to him, most of what I have said to you. But that the Insufferableness of his Behaviour (*sic*) put it out of my Power. The Dialogue between us had some-

thing singular in it, and I think I cannot better make you amends for this irksome Letter, than by giving you a particular Act of it and the manner I found myself obliged to treat him which By the by, I should have done with still more Roughness But that he sheltered himself under the character of yr Plenipo: How far His Excellency exceeded his Instructions you will perceive (*sic*) I know, from the acct I have given of the Hint in your Letter, wch was all the Foundation for what passd. I stepp'd into his shop, just after sermon on *All Saints*, when with an Air of much Gravity and Importance, he beckond me to follow him into an inner Room; No sooner had he shut the Dore (*sic*), But with the awful solemnity of a Premier who held a Letter de Chachêt upon whose contents my Life or Liberty depended — after a minuits Pause, — He thus opens his Commission. Sir — My Friend the A. Deacon of Cleveland not caring to preach his turn, as I conjectured, has left me to provide a Preacher, — But before I can take any steps in it with Regard to you — I want first to know, Sir, upon what Footing you and Dr. Sterne are? — Upon what Footing! — Yes, Sir, how your Quarrel stands? — Whats that to you? — How our Quarrel stands! Whats that to you, you Puppy? But, Sir, Mr. Blackburn would know — Whats that to him? — But, Sir, dont be angry, I only want to know of you, whether Dr. Sterne will not be displeased in case you should preach — Go look; I've just now been preaching and you could not have fitter opportunity to be satisfied. — I hope, Mr. Sterne, you are not angry. Yes, I am; but much more astonished at your *Impudence*. I know not whether the Chancellors stepping in at this Instant and flapping to the Dore, Did not save his tender soul the Pain of the last word; However that be, he retreats upon this unexpected Rebuff, takes the Chancellr aside, asks his Advice, comes back submissive, begs Quarter, tells me Dr. Hering had quite satisfied him as to the Grounds of his scruple (tho' not of his Folly) and therefore beseeches me to let the matter pass, and to preach the turn. When I — as Percy complains in Harry ye 4 —

... All smarting with my wounds
To be thus pester'd by a Popinjay,
Out of my Grief and my Impatience
Answer'd negligently, I know not what
... for he made me mad
To see him shine so bright & smell so sweet
& talk so like a waiting Gentlewoman

— Bid him be gone & seek Another fitter for his turn. But as I was too angry to have the perfect Faculty of recollecting Poetry, however pat to my case, so I was forced to tell him in plain Prose tho' somewhat elevated — That I would not preach, & that he might get a Parson where he could find one. But upon Reflection, that Don John had certainly exceeded his Instructions, and finding it to be just so, as I suspected — there being nothing in yr letter but a cautious hint — And being moreover satisfied in my mind, from this and

twenty other Instances of the same kind, that this Impertinence of his like many others, had issued not so much from his Heart as from his Head, the Defects of which no one in reason is accountable for, I thought I shd wrong myself to remember it, and therefore I parted friends, and told him I would take care of the turn, which I shall do with Pleasure.

It is time to beg pardon of you for troubling you with so long a letter upon so little a subject — which as it has proceeded from the motive I have told you, of ridding you of uneasiness, together with a mixture of Ambition not to lose either the Good Opinion, or the outward marks of it, from any man of worth and character, till I have done something to forfeit them, I know your Justice will excuse.

I am, Revd Sir, with true Esteem and Regard, of which I beg you'll consider this letter as a Testimony,

Yr faithful & most affte
Humble Servt

LAU : STERNE.

P. S.

Our Dean arrives here on Saturday. My wife sends her Respts to you & yr Lady.

I have broke open this letter, to tell you, that as I was going with it to the Post, I encountered Hilyard, who desired me in the most pressing manner, not to let this affair transpire — & that you might by no means be made acquainted with it — I therefore beg you will never let him feel the effects of it, or even let him know you know ought about it — for I half promised him, — tho' as the letter was wrote, I could but send it for your own use — so beg it may not hurt him by any ill Impression, as he has convinced it proceeded only from lack of Judgmt.

To

The Reverend Mr. Blackburn
Arch-Deacon of Cleveland
at Richmond.

We note that Hilyard did not live to see Sterne achieve his great success, for the first two volumes of *Tristram Shandy* were "Printed for and sold by John Hinxham (successor to the late Mr. Hilyard), Bookseller in Stonegate," York.

The other letter we have mentioned, written by Dr. Jaques Sterne, begins thus : —

Decem. 6 : 1750.

Good Mr. Archdeacon

I wil beg leave to rely upon your Pardon for taking the Liberty I do with you in relation to your Turns of preaching in the Minister. What occasions it is, Mr. Hilyard's employing the last time the Only person unacceptable to me in the whole Church, an ungrateful & unworthy nephew of my own, the Vicar of Sutton; and I should be much obligd to you, if you would please either to appoint any person yourself, or leave it to your Register to appoint one when you are not here. If any of my turns would suit you

better than your own, I would change with you. . . .

Endorsed —

Mr. Jaques Sterne — reprobation of his nephew Yorick — & mention of the Popish nunnery at York.

TO A FRIEND LEAVING ENGLAND IN SEPTEMBER.

DEAR FRIEND, you leave our chary northern clime,

Now that the daylight's waning, and the leaf Hangs sere on chestnut bough, and beech, and lime ;

The husbandman has garnered every sheaf ;
Pale autumn leads us to the lingering grief
Of melancholy winter ; while you fly
On summer's swallow-wings to Italy.

Great cities — greater in decay and death —
Dream-like with immemorial repose —

Whose ruins like a shrine forever sheath
The mighty names and memories of those
Who lived and died to die no more — shall close

Your happy pilgrimage ; and you shall learn,
Breathing their ancient air, the thoughts that burn

Forever in the hearts of after men : —

Yea, from the very soil of silent Rome
You shall grow wise ; and walking, live again
The lives of buried peoples, and become
A child by right of that eternal home,
Cradle and grave of empires, on whose walls
The sun himself subdued to reverence falls.

You will see Naples and the orange-groves
Deep-set of cool Sorrento — green and gold
Mingling their lustre by calm azure coves,
Or like the fabled dragon fold on fold
Curled in the trough of cloven hills, or rolled
Down vales Hesperian, through dim caverned shades

Of palace ruins and lone colonnades :

Capri — the perfect island — boys and girls
Free as spring flowers, straight, tall and musical

Of movement ; in whose eyes and clustering curls
The youth of Greece still lingers ; whose feet fall

Like kisses on green turf by cypress tall
And pine-tree shadowed ; who, unknowing care,
Draw love and laughter from the innocent air :

Ravenna in her widowhood — the waste
Where dreams a withered ocean ; where the hand

Of time has gently played with tombs defaced
Of priest and emperor ; where the temples stand,

Proud in decay, in desolation grand,—
Solemn and sad like clouds that lingeringly
Sail and are loth to fade upon the sky :

Siena, Bride of Solitude, whose eyes
Are lifted o'er the russet hills to scan
Immeasurable tracts of limpid skies,
Arching those silent sullen plains where man
Fades like a weed mid mouldering marshes
wan ;

Where cane and pine and cypress, poison-
proof,
For death and fever spread their stately roof.

You will see Venice—glide as though in
dreams

Midmost a hollowed opal : for her sky,
Mirrored upon the ocean-pavement, seems
At dawn and eve to build in vacancy
A wondrous bubble-dome of wizardry,
Suspended where the light, all ways alike
Circumfluent, upon her sphere may strike.

There Titian, Tintoret, and Giambellin,
And that strong master of a myriad hues,
The Veronese, like flowers with odours keen,
Shall smite your brain with splendours :
they confuse

The soul that wandering in their world must
lose

Count of our littleness, and cry that then
The gods we dream of walked the earth like
men.

About your feet the myrtles will be set,
Grey rosemary, and thyme, and tender blue
Of love-pale labyrinthine violet ;

Flame-born anemones will glitter through
Dark aisles of roofing pine-trees ; and for
you

The golden jonquil and starred asphodel
And hyacinth their speechless tales will tell.

The nightingales for you their tremulous song
Shall pour amid the snowy scented bloom
Of wild acacia bowers, and all night long
Through starlight-flooded spheres of purple
gloom

Still lemon boughs shall spread their faint
perfume,
Soothing your sense with odours sweet as
sleep,
While wind-stirred cypresses low music keep.

For you the mountain Generous shall yield
His wealth of blossoms in the noon of
May—

Fire-balls of peonies, and pearls concealed
Of lilies in thick leafage, glittering spray
Of pendulous laburnum boughs, that sway
To scarce-felt breezes, gilding far and wide
With liquid splendour all the broad hill-side.

Yea, and what time the morning mists are
furled

On lake low-lying and prodigious plain,
And on the western sky the massy world
Contracts her shadow—for the sunbeams
gain

Unseen, yet growing,—while the awful
train
Of cloudless Alps stand garish, mute and
chill,

Waiting the sun's kiss with pale forehead
still,—

You from his crest shall see the sudden fire
Flash joyous : lo ! the solitary snow
First blushing ! Broader now, brighter and
higher,

Shoots the strong ray ; the mountains row
by row

Receive it, and the purple valleys glow ;
The smooth lake-mirrors laugh ; till silently
Throbs with full light and life the jocund sky !

Farewell : you pass ; we tarry : yet for us
Is the long weary penitential way
Of thought that souls must travel, dubious,
With tottering steps and eyes that wane
away

'Neath brows more wrinkle-withered day by
day :

Farewell ! There is no rest except in death
For him who stays or him who journeyeth.

Cornhill Magazine.

J. A. S.

THE *Times* quotes a letter from a St. Louis paper, giving an account of extensive ruins, found some miles east of Florence, on the Gila river. The principal is a parallelogram fortification, 600 ft. in width by 1600 ft. in length. The walls, which were built of stone, have long been thrown down, and are overgrown by trees and vines. In many places the stones have disappeared beneath the surface. Within the enclosed area are the remains of a structure 200 ft. by 260 ft., constructed of roughly-hewn stones. In some places the walls remain almost perfect to a height of some 12 ft. above the surface. On the inner sides of the wall of the supposed palace there

are yet perfectly distinct tracings of the image of the sun. There are two towers at the south-east and south-west corners of the great enclosure still standing, one of which is 26 ft. and the other 31 ft. high. These have evidently been much higher. A few copper implements, some small golden ornaments—one being an image of the sun with a perforation in the middle—and some stone utensils, and two rudely-carved stone vases, much like those found at Zupetaro and Copan, in Central America, are all the works of art yet discovered. The ruins are situated in a small plain, elevated nearly 200 ft. above the bed of the Gila. Just west of the walls of the fortifica-

tion there is a beautiful stream of water revealing its source in the mountains, which crosses the plain, and by a series of cataracts falls into the Gila about two miles below. The fragments of pottery and polished stone reveal a condition of civilization among the builders of these ruins analogous to that of the ancient Peruvian, Central American and Mexican nations. The country in the vicinity is particularly wild and unusually desolate. No clue to the builders of this great fortified palace, with its towers and moat, has been discovered, but it would seem that this whole country was once peopled by a race having a higher grade of civilization than is found among any of the native tribes of the later ages. But whether this race were the ancestors of the Pimos, or some extinct people, is not known. It is understood that these ruins will be thoroughly explored within the present year.

BLACK POWDER FOUND IN SNOW; WHAT IS IT?—In a letter from M. Nordenskjöld on Carbonaceous Dust, with Metallic Iron, observed in Snow (dated from Mossel Bay, lat. 79° 53m. N., received at Tromsøe July 24), the writer remarks that in December 1871 he found in some snow collected towards the end of a five or six days' continuous fall in Stockholm a large quantity of dark powder like soot, and consisting of an organic substance rich in carbon. It was like the meteoric dust which fell with meteorites at Hesse near Upsal in January 1869. It contained also small particles of metallic iron. Suspecting the railways and houses of Stockholm might have furnished these matters, he got his brother, who lived in a desert district in Finland, to make similar experiments; which he did, and obtained a similar powder. In his Arctic voyage the writer has met with like phenomena. The snow from floating ice has furnished on fusion a greyish residue, consisting mostly of diatoms (whole or injured); but the black specks, a quarter of a millimetre in size, contained metallic iron covered with oxide of iron, and probably also carbon. He thinks, therefore, that snow and rain convey cosmic dust to the earth, and invites further observation on the subject. M. Daubree, in presenting the letter, recalled a case of meteoric dust having fallen at Orgueil in 1864. He expressed the hope that M. Nordenskjöld has obtained sufficient quantities of pulverulent matter to be able to determine a characteristic fact—the presence or absence of nickel.

IN the course of a few weeks, the German Imperial corvette *Gazelle*, under the command of Captain von Schleinitz, will leave Kiel with

the staff of astronomers sent by the German Government to observe the transit of Venus (on December 8) on the Kerguelen Islands, in the South Indian Ocean. Another detachment of German observers will at the same time be stationed on the Auckland Islands. In the event of a failure on the part of the former portion of the staff to obtain good observations of the transit, the *Gazelle* will convey them and the other German observers to the Mauritius about the middle of December, and leave them there till the end of January, 1875, when they will enter upon a voyage to the Antarctic Seas with the special object of investigating the polar currents and other phenomena connected with the south-polar region.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *London and China Telegraph*, writing from Kandy (Ceylon), says:—"The changes that have taken place in the matter of coffee cultivation within the last three years are simply marvellous. New districts formerly despised have risen up like magic. Whole country-sides of primeval forest have given way to the axe of the cultivator, and districts whose only inhabitants were the elephant, the chetah and the elk, are now flourishing plantations of coffee." The writer observes that the leaf disease, for which no cure has been discovered, has been very troublesome. "It is a fungus that attaches itself like a miniature mushroom to the lower side of the leaf of the coffee tree, and appears to extract its vitality, for the leaf withers and dies. It has now been among us for four years, and has done an incalculable amount of mischief." The long drought, which has had such a disastrous effect in India, has also unfavourably affected the Ceylon coffee crop this year.

THE exhibition of Colonial products in Paris will contain an enormous nugget of gold coming from Cayenne. At the present moment this mass of precious metal, which is in its crude state, is at the Banque de France, and it will be melted down into an ingot one day next week. It weighs 200 kilogrammes, and is worth 600,000 francs. It was sent to Paris by one of the companies working the mines discovered a few years ago in the French colony of Guayana. The quantity of gold won for some time past from these workings has, it is stated, become so considerable, that the project is seriously considered of diverting the waters of the river Oyapoch and its affluents from their present beds, in order to facilitate the extraction of the gold which there is no doubt is concealed there.